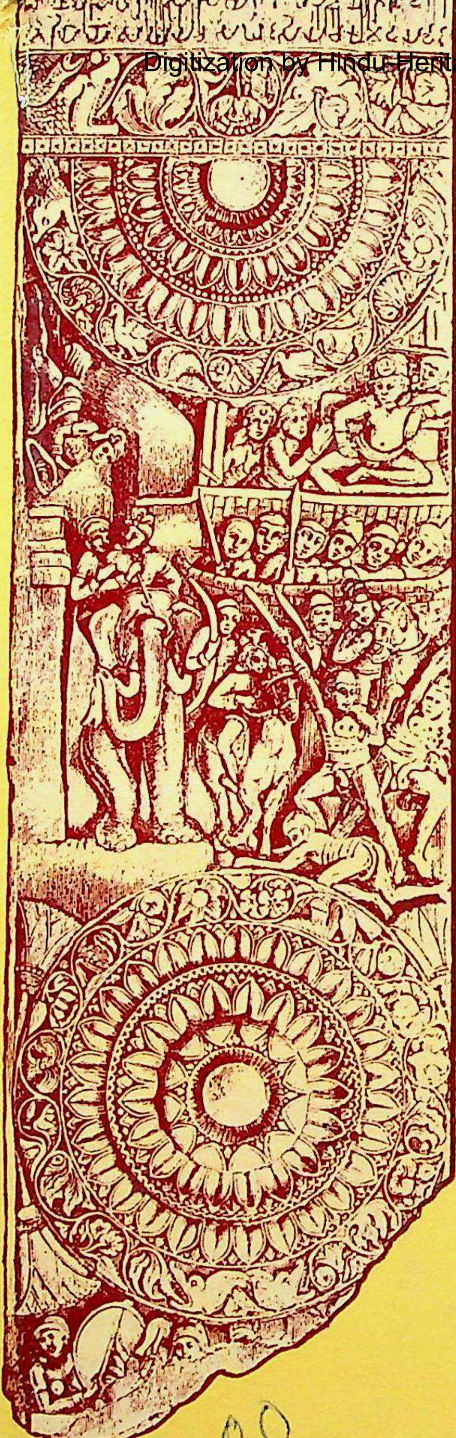

LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA

M. P. Singh

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राज्य संग्रहालय पुस्तकालय
प्रो० बी एन० पुरी
संग्रह
लखनऊ

LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA

(c. A.D. 800—1200)

राज्य संग्रहालय पुस्तकालय
प्रो० बी० एन० पुरी
संग्रह
लखनऊ

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VISHWAVIDYALAYA PRAKASHAN
VARANASI

LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA

by

Mahendra Pratap Singh, *M.A.*, *Ph.D*

◆

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To

My Parents

"This book is not a *polemical* one. I shall not produce the arguments of our antagonists in order to refute such of them as I believe to be in the wrong. My book is nothing but *a simple historic record of facts.*"

(*Sachau : Alberuni's India, p. 7*)

"And I have truly done what every one is bound to do in respect of any particular science, that is, to accept gratefully the original contributions of his predecessors, to correct fearlessly the errors that come to his notice and to preserve what he himself discovers and to leave it as a record for the future generations that are to follow him in time."

(*Al-Biruni in his Canon Masadicus*)

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Preface

There is a growing awareness that our picture of India, confined as it has been largely to political life and institutions, is one-sided and that it should be broad-based. The present study is a modest attempt to depict the cultural life of India during the early medieval period, which may be roughly put at between A.D. 800 and 1200. The chief sources of information used in this book mainly consist of the Arab classical accounts. The main theme of the study has, therefore, a direct bearing on the information available in these accounts, It need hardly be over-emphasised that the information provided by the Arab writers needs to be carefully checked with the help of materials available in India.

Every Indian thing, namely, the land, its size, its climate, the nature of its people, their habits and institutions, their social and religious beliefs and customs seemed strange to foreign observers. The accounts of early Muslim writers, like those of their Greek and Chinese predecessors, have a special significance as a source of Indian history and culture. So far, these sources have been used mostly to study the political condition of the period, including the Muslim invasions of India. The Muslim writers of this period have recorded their observations and impressions which throw a flood of light on many aspects of Indian life. The present study is essentially a socio-religious history of early medieval India mainly based on the Muslim writings of the period. In this connection mention may be made of the two pioneering works, namely, *Arab Aur Bharat Ke Sambandh* (1930) by Sayyid Sulayman Nadvi and *Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India* by S.M.H. Nainar (1942). Nadvi's work is a preliminary study and lacks in depth. Nainar's work deals only with southern India and puts emphasis on geography, products, kings and kingdoms. The chapter on ethnography is devoted to the cultural life of South India. Moreover, it does not make full use of Indian source-material. It also does not utilise the great work of Al-Biruni, which is undoubtedly one of the most relible record left by any Muslim writer of any age.

As regards the sources on which the present study is based, I have used the material available in the writings of Sulayman (851 A.D.), Abu Zayd (950 A.D.), Ibn Khurradadhbih (846 A.D.), Al-Baladhuri (892 A.D.), Al-Masudi (943 A.D.), Ibn Rusta (9th-10th century A.D. or the second half of the 3rd century A.H.), Ibn Nadim (902–3 A.D.), Shahriyar (900 A.D.), Mutahhar (950 A.D.), Istakhri (951 A.D.), Ibn Hauqal (979 A.D.), Maqdisi (985 A.D.), Al Biruni (1030 A.D), Marvazi (1120 A.D.), Shahrastani (1153 A.D.) and Al-Idrisi (1154 A.D.). Besides, I have used the historical works of writers like Gardizi, Utbi (11th century A.D.) and such works as the *Hudud al-Alam* (982 A.D.), and the *Chachnama*. Hudud is a geographical work of great importance. I have also utilised a few more works mentioned in the first two volumes of *History of India As Told by its own Historians* by Elliot and Dowson.

From about the middle of the 9th century to the 14th century a number of Arabic geographical works dealing with Indian life and customs were produced. Many writers actually visited India, important of whom were Sulayman, Al-Masudi and Al-Biruni. Others who never visited the country included Ibn Khurradadhbih, Al-Baladhuri, Marvazi and Al-Idrisi. The first group had the clear advantage of observing things itself, while the second relied on the reports of others and the works of their predecessors. All these works supply useful information on Indian life.

The most important feature of Indian history in this period is the arrival of Muslims in India in the beginning of the 8th century. In course of time they became a political force in this country. Naturally, there was a desire to know more of India. Many writers recorded their observations and imprestechnical terms, the significance of which would have been lost if I had attempted to paraphrase or summarize them. Indian sources have been used to sift, analyse and at places to confirm the accounts of Muslim writers. They have been found of great help in viewing many aspects of Indian life in proper perspective.

The book has been divided into nine chapters under the following heads: Hindu Social Organisation, Position of Castes, Marriage Laws and Customs, Position of Women, Everyday Life of the People, Popular Beliefs, Superstitions and Practices, Religious Beliefs and Sects, Religious Rites, Fasts and Festivals, and Law and Punishment.

The first two chapters deal with the social organisation of the Hindus and the status of the various castes in the social hierarchy. The chapters also deal with the Āśrama system, the sixteen castes of Al-Biruni, the occupational divisions of castes, the privileges of the higher castes and the corresponding degradation of the Antyajas. In the third and fourth chapters we have dealt with the institution of marriage and the general position of women. In these chapters we have discussed Hindu marriage-laws, the forms of marriage, the age of marriage, child-marriage and widow remarriage, polygamy, etc. They also deal with the position of women in different situations, namely, their position as girl, mother, widow, their legal and property right, the Purdah system, etc. The fifth chapter is concerned with the everyday life of the people in the early medieval period. It includes food and drink, dress and ornaments, amusements, toilet, and personal hygiene. The sixth chapter is devoted to popular beliefs, superstitions, manners, customs and practices of the Hindus in general and their attitude towards the Muslims in particular. The chapter includes the Antyeṣṭi Saṁkāra and the practice of committing suicide for religious purposes. In the seventh and eighth chapters we have discussed Hindu religious beliefs and practices. Religious sects, image-worship, festivals, pilgrimages and fasts have been dealt with in detail. The last chapter is concerned with law and punishment. As the sions. Early Muslim writers were, however, neither trained observers nor were the conversant with the language of the country; consequently, they sometimes misunderstood the significance of what they had seen. Al-Biruni, however, is a class by himself. His brilliant and scholarly study of India in the eleventh century is a mine of information. No study of the period can be complete without reference to Al-Biruni. His accounts throw light on almost every aspect of Indian life, namely, social organisation, the caste system, marriage, the position of women, manners and customs, everyday life of the people, religious beliefs and practices, law and punishment. The value of Al-Biruni's 'Indica' lies in its vast range and the authenticity of the information it supplies. As a keen observer he gives a reliable account of India as he had seen it. But he would have fallen into serious errors had he not had the opportunity of making a study of Indian thought and institutions as found in Samskrit literature. His book combines the advantage of study with that of personal observations.

The scope of the present study is limited to the socio-religious life of the people of India during the period *c.* A.D. 800-1200. I have left out geographical and political accounts because they cannot be covered within the limits of this work. Furthermore, any attempt to include these subjects could be made at the expense of what we consider essential to the socio-religious study of this period.

In the preparation of this book we have fully utilised the material available in the Dharmaśāstra literature, literary works, epigraphical records and the accounts of foreign travellers like Hsuan Tsang, I-tsing, etc., without which no serious study of Indian cultural life is possible. The Indian sources utilised here are not only contemporary; they even belong to the earlier as well as to a later period, but it was inevitable in a comparative study of this kind.

I have quoted extensively from the works of Muslim authors. At many places they have used expressions, including book is devoted to the study of social and religious life, we have omitted Hindu jurisprudence and the administration of justice.

The present work is substantially based on the thesis approved for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Banaras Hindu University in 1971.

I must express my sense of gratitude to the late Shri Trilochan Pant, formerly Reader in History, Banaras Hindu University for his valuable help and encouragement in the preparation of this work. I feel highly obliged to my freinds, Dr. K.L. Srivastava, Reader in History and Dr. J N. Tiwari, Reader in Ancient Indian History and Calture, Banaras Hindu University for their advice and suggestions. My thanks are also due to my colleagues, Dr. Mahesh Vikram Singh and Dr. Raghavendra Panthari, for checking the references and preparing the Index.

I am grateful to the authorities of Kashi Vidyapith, who have provided financial help for the publication of this book. I also thank Shri P.D. Modi of Vishwavidyalaya Prakashan, Varanasi for undertaking the publication of this book.

M.P. Singh

VARANASI
January 14, 1981.

Abbreviations

Abu Zayd	Ancient Accounts of India and China (Supplement), Tr. E. Renaudot.
ABORI.	Annals of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
Ait. Br.	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.
Al-Baladhuri	Futuh al-Buldan, Tr. P.K. Hitti and F.C. Murgotten.
ĀP.	Ānandāśram Press Edition.
Āp. Dh.S.	Āpastamba Dharmasūtra
Āp. Gṛ S.	Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra.
ASIR.	Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report.
Āśv. Gṛ.S.	Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra.
Baudh. Dh.S.	Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra.
Baudh. Gṛ.S	Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra.
BGA.	Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum.
BI.	Bibliotheca Indica Series, Clacutta.
BIS.	Bulletin of the Institute of Islamic Studies, Aligarh.
Al-Biruni	Al-Beruni's India, Tr. Edward C. Sachau.
Chachnama	Tr. Kalich Beg Fredunbeg.
CC.	Caturvarga-Cintāmaṇi of Hemādri.
EI.	Epigraphia Indica.
Elliot	History of India as Told by its own Historian, by Elliot and Dowson.
ECD.	Early Chauhan Dynasties by Dasharatha Sharma.
Gaut.	Gautama Dharmasūtra.
GOS.	Gaekwar Oriental Series, Baroda.
Gardizi	Zain ul Akhbar, 'Gardizion India', Tr. V. Minorsky,
Gṛhastha.	Gṛhasthakāṇḍa of KKT.

Hindustan	Hindustan Arbon Ki Nazar Men.
Hodivala	Studies in Indo-Muslim History.
Hudud	Hudud al-Alam, Tr. V. Minorsky.
HMHI.	History of Medieval Hindu India by C.V. Vaidya.
HDS.	History of Dharmaśāstra, by P.V. Kane.
IA.	Indian Antiquary.
IC.	Islamic Culture.
IHQ	Indian Historical Quarterly.
Ibn Battuta	Ibn Battuta, 'Travels in Asia and Africa', Tr. H.A.R. Gibb.
I. Khur.	Ibn Khurradadhbih, Kitab al-Masalik wa' l-Mamalik.
Ibn Rusta	Kitab al-Alaq al-Nafisa, Tr. Maqbul Ahmad.
Idrisi	Al-Sharif al-Idrisi, India and the Neighbouring Territories, Tr. S. Maqbul Ahmad.
Istakhri	Al-Masalik wa' l-Mamalik, Tr. S. Razia Jafri.
Jaimini	Jaimini Gṛhyasūtra.
JBBRS.	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.
Kauṭ.	Kauṭilya's Arthaśāstra.
Kṛ.	Kṛtyaratnākara.
KKT.	Kṛtyakalpataru of Lakṣmīdhara.
KSS.	Kathāsaritsāgara.
Marvazi	Sharaf al-Zaman Tahir Marvazi, On China The Turks and India, Tr. V. Minorsky.
MIQ.	Medieval India Quarterly.
Masudi	Muruj al-Dhahab : 'Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems', Tr. Aloy Sprenger.
Mutahhar	Mutahhar b. Tahir al-Maqdisi, Kitab al-Badwa l-Tarikh, Ed. Cl., Huart.
Manu.	Manusmṛti.
Mit.	The Commentary Mitākṣarā on Yāj.
Mbh.	Mahābhārata.
Nārada	Nāradasmṛti.

Nadim	Ibn al Nadim, Al-Fihrist.
Nadvi	Arab aur Bharat ke Sambandha.
Nainar	Arab Geographers' Knowledge of Southern India.
Niyata.	Niyatakālakāṇḍa of KKT.
NSP.	Nirṇaya Sāgara Press.
Pār. Gṛ.S.	Pārāshara Gṛhyasūtra.
Rāj.	Rājataraṅgiṇī of Kalhaṇa
Rām.	Rāmāyaṇa
Sharma	Studies in Medieval Indian History and Culture, by S.R. Sharma.
SC.	Smṛticandrikā
SS.	Smṛtināmasamuccaya.
SJGM.	Singhi Jaina Granthamālā,
SBE.	Sacred Books of the East.
Śukra	Śukranītisāra
Śat. Br.	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.
Shahrastani	Kitab al-Milal wa' l-Nihal, Tr. E. Rehatsek,
Shahriyar	Ajaib al-Hind, Marvels of India, Tr. Marcel Device.
Sulayman	Silsilat-ut-Tawarikh, Ancient Accounts of India and China, Tr. E. Renaudot, Akhbar, Tr. M. J. Sauvaget.
Tīrtha.	Tīrthavivecanakāṇḍa of KKT.
Upamiti.	Upamitibhavaprapañcakahā of Siddharṣi Sūri.
Vas. Dh.S.	Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra.
Vrata.	Vratakāṇḍa of KKT.
VMSP.	Vīramitrodaya Saṁskāraprakāśa.
Watters	On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India, by Thomas Watters.
Yule	Marco Polo.
Yāj.	Yājñavalkyasmṛti.

CHAPTER I

HINDU SOCIAL ORGANISATION

The Structure of Society

Hindu society, during the early medieval period, was theoretically organised on the basis of the Varṇāśramadharma (the Dharma of class and stage of life) and was governed almost by the same laws with minor differences here and there in some details. The varṇas comprised the Brāhmaṇas, the Kṣatriyas, the Vaiśyas and, the Śūdras; while the stages of life were represented by students, householders, forest-dwellers and wandering mendicants.[1] In the beginning the basis of the Varṇa was purely occupational, but during this period the main emphasis was laid on birth and heredity. Referring to this Al–Biruni writes : "The Hindus call their castes 'Varṇa', i.e., colours, and from a genealogical point of view they call them Jātaka, i.e., births. These castes are from the beginning only four."[2] The statement of Al–Biruni is also supported by Sulayman and Al–Masudi who inform us that royalty and the nobility were confined to the same family. It was also true of the families of the Wazirs, Kazis, high officers, learned men and physicians.[3] This theoretical basis of the varṇas is also pointed out by Huen Tsang, who says that the four Hindu castes were based on 'hereditary clan distinctions', i.e., a Brāhmaṇa was to be born in the family of a Brāmaṇa and Kṣatriya in that of a Kṣatriya. He further tells us that these four castes formed "classes of various degrees of ceremonial purity".[4] It is clear from the foregoing that the main basis of the division of society was the system of the varṇas which were four in number, but evidently they had lost their original significance and attained the rigid spirit of 'Jāti' (caste), which emphasised birth and heredity

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 100; Al-Biruni, though writes about Āśramas, but associates them only with the Brāhmaṇas. Ibid, II, pp. 130-33.

[2] Ibid, I, p. 100.

[3] Elliot, I, pp. 6, 20; Sulayman, p. 32.

[4] Watters, I, p. 168.

Varna, Caste and Colour

The term which is generally used for castes is 'ajanas' (races) or 'guruh' (classes). In Hindu scriptures the word 'varṇa' is used for caste, though the term varṇa does not mean caste and has never meant "caste".[1] Al-Biruni uses varṇa and also mentions the word 'Jātaka' (al–mavalid, i.e., births) which, he says, was applied from the genealogical point of view.[2] He also uses the word 'tabaqat', when he says that the Antyajas were not reckoned amongst any class.[3] Gardizi used the Persian word guruh (classes)[4] and Idrisi uses ajanas (races).[5] Al–Biruni associates varṇa with colour.[6] Though the word varṇa means 'colour', it cannot be held that the four main castes were distinguished from each other by the colour of their skin. Then the question arises, why did he mention the word 'colour'? As we have already said, that the Indian society was divided into four varṇas on the basis of occupation : Priesthood and its duties, legal and educational, were attached with the Brāhmaṇas; Military and administrative services were rendered by the Kṣatriyas; Agriculture and trade were done by the Vaiśyas; and all kinds of menial work were performed by the Śūdras.[7] In the Mahābhārata, the Brāhmaṇas

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1. A.L. Basham : *Wonder that was India*, pp 35, 148-49.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 100.
3. Ibid, p. 101. Sàchau translates 'tabaqat' as 'castes,' which does not seem to represent the true connotation of the Arabic term used by Al-Biruni. 'Classes' is a better translation. S. Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 117, fn.
4. Gardizi, p. 627.
5. Idrisi, pp. 36, 145-146. Dr. S. Maqbul Ahmad thinks that 'ajanas' was probably a translation of the word 'jātaka', which, according to Al-Biruni, meant al-mawalid (births). *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 115, fn. ; V. Minorsky translated 'ajanas' as races (castes). *Marvazi*, pp. 26, 39.
6. Ram Gopal : *India in the Vedic Kalpasūtras*, pp. 114-115. cf. Kane : *HDS.*, II, pp. 25 ff.
7. *Manu.*, I. 88-91, X, 75.79.99. cf. *Āp.*, II. 10, 4-7; *Vaś.*, II. 13-19; *Baudh.*, I. 18. 1-4; Vi., II. 1-7; *Yāj.*, I. 118-119.

have been described as white, the Kṣatriyas as red, the Vaiśyas as yellow and the Śūdras as black.[1] Probably these colours are associated with the 'guṇas', as the Nilakaṇṭha commentary suggests. The Satvaguṇa is described as white, the Rajoguṇa as red and, the Tamoguṇa as black.[2] Probably on the basis of their 'guṇa' and 'Karma' of the four the first is described as white, because the Brāhmaṇas pursued superior avocations and led a pure life; the second as red, because the Kṣatriyas, being of the warrior class, had a fiery nature; the third as yellow, because the Vaiśyas handled yellow gold in the pursuit of trade and the ripe golden corn; and the fourth as black because the Śūdras performed dirty and menial work.[3]

The Origin of the Caste System

As stated above, the Hindu society was composed of the usual four varṇas. Al–Biruni is the only writer who wrote on the authority of Hindu sources about the divine origin of the four varṇas, which is preserved in tradition. According to him the classes were four from the very beginning, the highest among whom were the Brāhmaṇas, who according to the Hindu scriptures[4] were created from the head of Brahma. The next in order were the Kṣatriyas, who were created from his shoulders and hands. They were followed by the Vaiśyas, who were created from his thigh, and lastly, the Śūdras, from his feet. But as Brahman was just another name for the force called nature, and the head being the highest part of the animal body, the Brahmans were considered by the Hindus "the very best of mankind".[5]

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1. *Mbh.*, *Śānti.*, 118. 5.
2. *Mbh.*, *Śānti.*, 188. 5.
3. *Ind Ant.*, IX, p. 52; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 1.6.3-5; cf. *Gita*, IV. 13; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, IX. 36-42; IX. 160-165
4. There was a lacuna in Al-Biruni's text which Sachau supplied with the help of *Manusmṛti* (I. 87) : *mukha-bāhu-uru-pad-janam* (Al-Biruni : *Annotations*, II, p. 293). The statement of Al-Biruni about that the classes were only four from the very beginning is also confirmed by *Manu*, who says that there are only four varnas and there is no fifth. *Manu* , X. 4.
5. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 100-101.
On this subject the remarks of al-qalqshandi are worth noting. He writes on the basis of the Taqwin-al-Buldan that the Brāhmanas of Kanauj attri

Al-Biruni's account of the origin[1] of the varṇas is the same as depicted in Hindu books. There are several passages in the vedic as well as Smṛti literature dealing with the origin of the varṇas. The oldest of the Hymn in the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Ṛgveda says that the "Brāhmaṇa varṇa represent the mouth of the Puruṣa, the Rājanya (Kṣatriya) his arms, the Vaiśya his thighs and the Śūdra his feet.[2] The Puruṣa may be translated as 'the universal man' referring perhaps to mankind as a whole. He is also called Prajāpati, 'the Lord of Beings'. We may now conclude that from the very beginning the Hindu society was divided into four great classes, which continued down to the period under consideration, and was 'given religious sanction and looked on as fundamental".

The Division of Seven Castes of the Hindus

The accounts of most of the early Muslim writers on the Indian caste system are based on the original report drawn up by the envoy of Yaha b.Khalid This report mentions only seven races in all.[3] It gives the first place to al-Shakthariya. After them, the four castes, the Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, the Vaiśya and the Śūdras are mentioned. The last place is given to the Ḍomba and the Cāṇḍāla.[4] Ibn Khurradadhbih says

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bute their origin to Brahma, the first of their Sages. Hudud al-Alam also points to their divine relations. According to it the Brahmans say that they belong to the prophet Abraham's tribe. p., 88, Tr. Minorsky.

[1] Al-qalqshandi—*Subh-ul Asha,* Tr. Otto Spie, p. 39.
The divine origin of the Brāhmanas can be supported by the accounts of Al-Masudi. Though he does not mention their origin in detail, he speaks about them (Al-Barahima) as the descendants of al-Brahman and adds that because of this they were considered the highest and the most noble among the Indian castes (Masudi, I, p. 154). Al-Brahman taken as 'Adam and a messenger of God sent to India' may be identified with Brahma, the first of created things (Ibid., p. 157). Al-Biruni also mentions Pitāmaha as Brahma, the First Father (Al-Biruni, pp. 73, 183). cf. *Al-Masudi Millenary Commemoration Volume,* pp. 101-102, fn. 2. *Hudud al-Alam* also mentions....p. 88.

[2] *Ṛgveda,* X. 90.12. cf. Manu., I. 31.87; *Mbh. Śānti.* 122. 4-5, *Vāyu Purāṇa,* IX. 113; *Viṣṇu Purāṇa,* I.6 6.

[3] S. Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations,* p. 115.

[4] S. Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations,* p. 115.

that there are 'seven classes of the Hindus., viz, (1) Sabkufria,[1] among whom are men of high caste, and from among whom kings are chosen. The people of other six classes do the men of this class homage, and them only,[2] (2) Brahma, who totally abstain from wine and fermented liquors, (3) Kataria, who drink not more than three cups of wine, the daughters of the class af Brahma are not given in marriage to the sons of this class, but the Brahmas take their daughters, (4) Sudaria, who are by profession husband-men, (5) Baisura, are artificers and domestics, (6) Sandalia, who perform menial offices, (7) Lahud, their women are fond of adorning themselves and the men are fond of amusements and games of skill."[3] Following Ibn Khurradadhbih,[4] al-Idrisi gives detailed information on this topic. He says, "The people of India are divided into seven castes (ajanas).[5] One of these is al-Sakhariya (?). They are the most noble of them all. The kings belong to them and not to any other (caste). All other castes bow to them whenever they meet them whereas they do not bow to any one.

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[1] Nainar reads Shakthariyya (p. 129, fn. 81).

[2] Goeje translates as follows : "All the other castes bow to them, but they do not render homage to any (*BGA*, VI, p. 71; Tr. 52. cf. *Journal Asiatique*, 1865, p. 68 and Tr. p. 295). The sentence is copied by Idrisi, which Dowson translates thus : "All the other castes pay homage to them, but they render homage to no one" (Elliot, I, p. 76).

[3] Elliot, I. pp. 16-17. cf. *BGA.*, VI, p. 71
Nainar mentions the 7th caste as Dhunbiyya (p. 132, fn. 95).

[4] Al-Idrisi's account is mainly based on the larger edition of Ibn Khurradadhbih (*BGA.*, VI, p. 71). Again there is a close resemblance between Idrisi's text and that of Marvazi (p. 39). (cf. Gardizi, pp. 627-28). According to Minorsky Marvazi would have consulted the original text of Ibn Khurradadhbih, but more probably he gathered additional information through the medium of Jayhaṁ. Idrisi had also consulted Jayhaṁ (Marvazi, pp. 123-24). As regards Gardizi, he clearly mentions Abu Abdlulah Jayhaṁ and his Kitāb-i-tavārikh from which he derived his information (Gardizi, p. 627). In any case, as Minorsky points out, the primary report, traces of which survive in the present abridged book of Ibn Khurradadhbih (*BGA*, VI. 71), must have been drawn up before A.D. 850 (Marvazi, p. 124).

[5] Idrisi, pp. 36-38. cf. Elliot, p. 76.

Then comes al–Barahima.[1] They are the devotees of India. They dress in leopard-skins or skins of other (animals).[2] Sometimes it so happens that one of them stands up with a staff in his hand and the people gather round him. Thus he keeps standing for the whole day until evening, giving a sermon to the people, reminding them of Almighty God and describing to them the affairs of all the peoples that have perished in the past.[3]....They worship idols believing in them as mediators between themselves and Almighty God.[4] After them comes the third, and they are al-K.Satriya. They drink upto the three bowls[5] of wine only, and do not drink immoderately, fearing that they might not remain in their senses.[1] This class marries into the Brahmans, while the Brahmans do not marry into them.[2] Next to these are al-Shudiya (Shudriya). They are peasants[3] and agriculturists. Next to them are al-Fasiya (al-Bayshiya), and they are artisans and craftsmen. Then, among them (the castes) there are al-Sandahya and they are musicians and the beauty of their women is well known[4] Al-R.K.ba (al-Dhunbiya)

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[1] Marvazi spells as Shakbiriya (p. 39) and Gardizi Sakb.tri and adds kingdoms (kingship ?) belong to them and they are few (p. 627)

[2] Elliot, I, p. 76. 'Skins of tigers', Jaubert, I, 98 'de tigre'.
"The Brahmans" according to *Marvazi*, "have the leadership under the king. They prostrate themselves before the Sumani, but the latter do not do so before them. Some of those who belong to this caste do not drink wine or intoxicating drinks" (Marvazi, p. 39). Gardizi adds that, "most of these Brahmans drink no wine and eat no meat" (Gardizi, p. 627). Sumani or Suman are 'Buddhist Śramanas. But they are never included in the caste system of the Hindus. Minorsky suggests that the passage is apparently an interpolation based on misunderstanding (*Marvazi* p. 124). It may also suggest that the Śramanas were respected by Brāhmanas and others on account of their spiritual status. Saints and monks of any sect were generally respected by the people including the kings. cf. Beal : *Buddhist Records of Western World*, I, *Intro.* XXXVII.

[3] Jaubert, l.c. and Elliot, l.c. : "and explaining to them the events which brought destruction upon the ancient people, that is, upon the Brahmans." cf. Nainar, p. 130.

[4] Idrisi, p. 37. The staff-bearers dressed in leopard.skins etc. may be identified, according to Dr. Ahmad, with the Daśanāmi Daṇḍins the order of Śaiva ascetics said to have been founded by Śaṅkarācārya. S. Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 116 fn, cf. Idrisi, p. 147 (Monior Williams, pp. 81-87). Nainar suggests that these accounts may refer to the Brāhmana Saṁnyāsīs, men of learning and heads of maths where they have number of disciples under instruction and training for religious discussion (p. 130).

[5] Cf. Elliot, I, p. 76; Jaubert, I, p. 98. Nainar uses 'Ratl' one pound troy, p. 130.

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1. Marvazi says, 'they (Kishtariya) do not drink more than thrice (at a time)', p. 39, cf. Gardizi, p. 627.
2. Nainar translates : This caste may marry Brahima women, but Brahima cannot take their women as wife. p. 131. On this he comments : Idrisi's information on the Brāhmana Kṣatriya marriage alliance is wrong. Perhaps his copy of Ibn Khurradadhbih misled him. p. 131, fn. 87. According to Marvazi, the Brāhmanas do not give (their own women) in marriage to them but marry theirs. p. 39. cf. Gardizi, p. 627.
3. Marvazi says : "Then the Shudriya (Śūdra) who are agriculturists and husband-men. The Kṣatriyas marry (their women) and give them theirs, while the Brahmans marry theirs but do not give them (their own).' p. 39. Gardizi writes : "The Śūdras (spelt Sudhriyan), agriculturists and gardeners (palizben). They associate with the Kshatriyas, from whom they take women and to whom they give theirs (but the Brahmans) do not give them women..." p. 627. Marvazi and Gardizi (on Kṣatriya-Śūdra matrimonial alliance) are misinformed. Anuloma marriages could be possible but Pratiloma marriages were unusual. Jaubert, l.c. and Elliot, l.c. 'Labourers'.
4. Marvazi says : "Then the Sandaliya (Cāṇḍāla), singers and players. Their women are beautiful and sometimes Brahmans become infaturted with them so as to abandon for them their religion (but otherwise) none of the castes mentioned touch them." (Marvazi, p. 39). Gardizi supplies more information when he says : "The sixth are the Chandala who are singers and also carry out punishments. They have beautiful women. If a Brahman falls in love with such a women, the keepers of religion expel him and consider him no more a Brahman. For this reason he who touches a Chandala becomes subject of harm. These Chandalas go about with a piece (of wood) in their hands at the end of that piece of wood there is a ring and within it smaller rings are fitted, and with this piece of wood they give warning that men, on seeing that sign and hearing the sound of the rings, should get out of their way and no harm befall them." (Gardizi, p. 627). cf. Fa-hien and I-tsing point out that the outcast Chandalas were required, while entering a city, to strike a piece of wood as a warning of their approach in order that the people might not be polluted by contact with them. *Legge's Travels of Fa-hien*, p. 43 and Takakusu, p. 139.

are dark-skinned,[1] and are people of amusement and games, and players of various (musical) instruments."[2]

Marvazi and Gardizi also divide the Hindu castes into seven races or classes. They were the Shakbiriya, the Brahmans, the Kishtariya, the Shudriya, the Bashiya, the Sandaliya and the Dunbiya[3]. Both these writers provide similar accounts about the seven castes. Their accounts, as stated above, correspond almost word for word with the statement of Ibn Khurradadhbih. Sometimes they provide more information than Ibn Khurradadhbih. All these four writers, namely Ibn Khurradadhbih, Idrisi, Marvazi and Gardizi, follow the same defective order of the castes and the same incorrect classification into seven categories. Accounting for this, Dr. Ahmad remarks that the original report from which they borrowed their information probably contained these defects.[4] The four traditional castes are mentioned in this list of seven but their order does not accord with Hindu scriptures. They place the Śūdras before the Vaiśyas, which is incorrect. The seven castes enumerated are, kings, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, Cāṇḍālas and Ḍombas. These seven castes, as described by the four writers, are identical if we make allowance for slight variations in spelling. There is, however, one variation in the name of the seventh caste. According to Al-Idrisi, the seventh is al-R.K. ba (al-Dhunbiya) and not Lahud or Zakya as Elliot mentions as the seventh caste of Ibn Khurradadhbih or Idrisi.[1] But here also Geoje's ms. differs from the Paris text of Elliot. He reads the name as Al-dhonbeyya,[2] which seems to bear greater resemblance to the seventh caste of Idrisi, Marvazi and Gardizi. All have the name al-R.K.ba (al-Dhunbiya) Dunbiya and Dunbi (Rubman) respectively. The seventh caste has been identified with the Domba.

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[1] Marvazi says : "Then the Dunbiya (ḍomba) who have a dark complexion and are performers and musicians. People treat them as Chandalas, but the latter do not mix or intermarry with them." (Marvazi, p. 39). Gardizi notes : "The seventh are the class called Dunbi (spelt Rubman) who are black-skinned. They are all players on stringed instruments and dances (pay-kub). They are altogether like the Chandalas. The latter mix with them and take women from them but do not give them theirs." (Gardizi, pp. 627-28). cf. De Goeje, p. 52. Dr. Nainar has translated Ibn Khurradadhbih's text as "pleasant companions for conversation " He says that they are reciters of stories. As the author is silent about the colour of other sects described by him earlier, he can hardly be expected to mention the colour of this particular community. Moreover the average Indian is of tawny colour (pp. 132 33). But Dr. S. Maqbul Ahmad rejects the view of Dr. Nainar and holds, "The main profession of the Dombas has been music and dancing and not story-telling. They are usually a dark-coloured people as compared to the fair colour of many Brahmans " (Idrisi, p. 38, fn. 1).

[2] 'Lastly, the Zakya, who are jugglers, tumblers and players of various instruments." Elliot., I, p. 76; cf. Jaubert, I, p. 99.

[3] Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, pp. 627-28.

[4] Idrisi, p. 146.

Goeje reads the first caste of the kings, viz., 'Subkufria' or 'al-Sakhariya' or 'Shakbiria' or 'Sakb.tri', as mentioned by Ibn Khurradadhbih, Idrisi, Marvazi and Gardizi respectively, as 'Shakthariya'.[3] In his opinion, it is a reduplication of 'Kṣatriya'. Khurradadhbih, he suggests, wrongly supposed the Kṣatriyas to be divided into two classes, one of Kings and nobles, another of soldiers. The king's caste has only a different spelling of the word Kṣatriyas and is based on the misunderstanding of Muslim writers, who believed that the king could belong to any but the highest category.[4]

The interpretation of Goeje is not accepted by Hodivala, who identifies this caste of the kings with the Saṁskṛta word 'Śakyaputra', 'Sons of Śakya'. He suggests that this was the honorific appellation assumed by Buddhist priests. These Buddhist priests were honoured even by kings. His hypothesis is based on the account of the Chachnama and Baladhuri's Chronicle that Buddhist priests were governors of towns and districts in the beginning of the 8th century. He concludes that "the title 'Śakyaputra' was probably coined on the model of 'Swamiputra', 'Sons of the Lord', which was an

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1. Elliot, pp. 16, 76.
2. BGA, VII, 71, Tr. 52.
3. Ibid, 71. L. 9, Tr. 52, Note.
4. BGA, Tr. 52, cf. Marvazi. p. 124.

epithet of Brahmans."[1] Minorsky does not support the identification of Hodivala and explains the Shakbiriya or Sakb.tri as 'Chakravarti' the royal title of the king's caste.[2] Dr. Ahmad suggests that this word can be identified with 'Thakurs'.[3] Dr. Altekar holds that the Subkufra or Sakriya seem to stand for Saṁskṛt 'Satkshatṅya'.[4] The distinction between the first and the second caste seems similar to that between the Kṣatriyas and the Rājanyas of the earlier period, "the former constituted the general military order while the latter were the members of the aristocracy descended from the royal stock." This distinction between the two castes of the Kṣatriyas, according to Dr. Altekar, "reminds us of the distinction between the Śūdras and 'Sachchhudras', though the former is not known to the Dharmaśastra literature."[5] In this way the Subkufra or Shakbiriya were members or descendants of royal families and as such could be distinguished from other ordinary Kṣatriyas, who are designated as the 3rd caste.[6] This distinction between the two was not made due to birth but probably to their occupational differences, otherwise these two castes were almost the same.[7] It seems probable that those who constituted the class of the ruling families were the same, they were later on called the Rajputs, who on account of their princely birth, high morals and undaunted resistence against the Muslims, occupied the first place among the list of the seven castes, as mentioned by the Muslim writers. The word 'Rajputa' is the corrupt form of Sanskrit word 'Rajputra', meaning 'the son of kings'. It conveys the sense of the Kṣatriya varṇa, which descended from that clan of the Aryans constituting the Rājanya class in the Vedic period. In any case the information given by these writers regarding the first caste, implies rule and kingship which during this age belonged mainly to the Kṣatriya class.

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[1] Hodivala, pp. 18-19.

[2] Marvazi, p. 124 and fn. 1; Gardizi, p. 627, fn. 1.

[3] Idrisi, p 146.

[4] Altekar : *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, p. 319, and fn. 4.

[5] Altekar : *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, pp. 319 and 333.

[6] C.V. Vaidya : *HMHI.*, Vol. II, P. 178. This kind of distinction can be seen in the Buddhist literature, in which the ruling class is placed at the top and the ordinary Kṣatriyas were below the Brāhmanas. In the *Pāli Nidānakathā* (I. 49) and the Sanskrit *Lalitavistāra* (I. 20) we are told in the story of the Buddha's early life that "While a Brāhmaṇa and the Kṣatriya are the two highest classes, the Kṣatriyas are now admitted to hold the topmost rank." *A Comprehensive History of India*, Vol. II, p. 461.

[7] R.B. Singh : *History of the Chahamanas*, p. 323.

The traditional number of castes is four, but the Muslim writers divide them into seven. Incidentally, the ancient Greek writers on India also divide the Hindu castes into seven groups, though they differ in some respects from the division given by Muslim writers. The Greek writers do not mention any of the untouchables among their castes, while the Muslim writers include at least two, viz., the Cāṇḍāla and the Ḍomba among the untouchable classes. Arrian, who bases his account on Megasthenes and Eratosthenes, divides the people of India into about seven castes : (i) The Sophists (Philosopher or Brāhmaṇas), (ii) husbandmen (the tillers of the soil), (iii) herdsmen (cowherds and shepherds), (iv) handicraftsmen (Artificers merchants and boatmen), (v) warriors, (vi) Inspectors (Superintendents, who belonged to the intelligence service of the king), and (vii) Assessors (the councillors of the state).[1] Pliny mentions the various group as belonging to 'separate occupations."[2] Dr. Maqbul Ahmad attributes astrological reason to the grouping of castes by the Arabs. "The number seven had great significance both for the Greeks and later for the Arabs."[3]

The Sixteen Castes of Al-Biruni

Al-Biruni, however, differs from these writers and provides interesting information about the caste system prevalent during his time. He divides the castes into four traditional varṇas, as he writes, "The Hindus call their castes varṇa, i.e , colours and from a genealogical point of view they call them jātaka, i.e., births. These castes are from the very beginning only four.

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1. R.C. Majumdar : *The Classical Accounts of India*, pp. 224-226; cf. The account of Strabo is based on Megasthenes, ibid., pp. 263-68.
2. Ibid, p. 342.
3. S. Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 116.

I. The highest caste are the Brāhmaṇa, of whom the books of the Hindus tell that they were created from the head of Brahm. And as Brahm is another name for the force called nature, and the head is the highest part of the animal body, the Brāhmaṇas are the choice part of the whole genus. Therefore the Hindus consider them as the very best of mankind.

II. The next are the Kṣatriyas, who were created, as they say, from the shoulders and hands of Brahm. Their degree is not much below that of the Brāhmaṇa.

III. After them follow the Vaiśya, who were created from the thigh of Brahm.

IV. The Śūdras, who were created from his feet.

Between the latter two classes there is no (very great) distance. Much, however, as these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages mixed together in the same houses and lodgings."[1]

After mentioning these four principal castes, he enumerates the five semi untouchables and seven untouchables. They were called Antyajas. They were functional and not reckoned amongst any class (tabaqat) except the artisans. He writes : "After the Śūdra follow the people called Antyaja, who render various kinds of services, who are not reckoned amongst any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them, who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker, and weaver, for no others would condescend to have any thing to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fishermen, the hunter of wild animals and of birds and the weaver. The four castes do not live together with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them."[2] Then there were those who were distinguished only by their occupation and were degraded outcaste.

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1. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 100-101.
2. Ibid, I, p. 101.

"The people called Hadi Doma (Ḍomba), Cāṇḍāla and Badhatau (Sic) are not reckoned amongst any caste or guild. They are occupied with dirty work, like the clearning of the villages and other services. They are considered as one sole class, and distinguished only by their occupations. In fact, they are considered like illegitimate children; for according to general opinion they descend from Śūdra father and a Brāhmaṇi mother as the children of formication, therefore they are degraded outcaste."[1]

The sixteen castes of Al-Biruni can be identified with the seven castes of Ibn Khurradadhbih His castes comprising the four varṇas, viz., Brāhmaṇa. Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra, are identical with the 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 4th castes, viz., al-Brahima, al-Kishtariya, al-Bayshiya and al-Shudiya respectively. His two untouchables, Cāṇḍāla and Ḍomba can be compared with their Sandaliya and Dunbiya respectively. The twelve Antyajas mentioned by Al-Biruni can be classified as the Cāṇḍālas, known as antyajas in the Smṛtis[2] Perhaps Antyaja was a synonym for all classes of untouchables in the society. It may be pointed out that some of the later Smṛtis like Aṅgiras, Bṛhadyama, Atri and Āpastamba, which discuss the untouchables, pronounce most of these classes mentioned by Al-Biruni as untouchables.[3] The fuller, the shoemaker, the juggler, the fishermen, the basket and shield maker, and the Cāṇḍāla of Al-Biruni correspond to rajaka, carmakāra, nata or śailushika, jalopajīvī, veṇujīvī or burunda and Cāṇḍāla of these writers. The sailor, the hunter of wild animals and the weaver can be equated with Kaivarta, Vyādha and Tantuvāya of the Dharmaśāstras.

According to Dr Dasharatha Sharma Hadi can be identified with Dhadi of Rajasthan, whose occupation is not very different from that of Domba. Dhadis, like the Dombas, are singers. "Or is he to be regarded as Hali an agricultural labo-

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1. Ibid, I, pp. 101-102.
2. *Manu.*, IV. 61; *Yāj.*, I. 273; *Āp. Dh. Sūtra*, I.3.9.9.
3. *Aṅgiras*, vv. 17-20; *Bṛhadyama*, Ch. I and II, *Atri.*, vv. 174 ff. *Āpastamba*, Ch IV. V.

urer or talkhatak ?"[1] The Ḍomba can be identified with the Svapāka of the Rājataraṅgiṇī, in which this class of untouchables has been mentioned as professional singers.[2] Their profession is similar to that of the Ḍombas of Al-Biruni, who played on lute and Sang.[3] The Bṛhatkathākoṣa gives Pana as another name for Ḍomba and depicts him as a professional cleaning hides, charming snakes, executing people condemned to death and getting their belongings as his remuneration.[4] The last among the untouchables, mentioned by Al-Biruni are 'Badhatau,. Nothing is definitely known about them. Sachau leaves 'Badhatau' unexplained and there is no such word in Sanskrit. Dr. Altekar tries to explain it as apabhraṅśa of Vadhaka or the executioner, who is untouchable even according to tha Dharmaśāstra literature.[5] Minorsky also thinks that they were a class of executioners. He derives the origin of the word from 'vadhya', 'a criminal' in Arabic badhu (with final 'u' instead of 'a', like in vata-baru).[6] They belonged perhaps to the class of executioners.[7] Al-Biruni states that they devoured flesh of dead animals, including dogs.[1] According to Atri, those who were eaters of dogs' flesh were called 'Svapāka'.[2] Medhātithi assigns them the job of executioners.[3] According to Dasharatha Sharma, Badhatau can perhaps be identified with a depressed class of S.E. Punjab and U.P.[4] According to their nature and profession, the outcastes comprising the class of jugglers, hunters of wild animals and of birds, Ḍombas and Cāṇḍālas can be placed with the 6th and 7th castes of the group of Ibn Khurradadhbih or of Zakya or of Idrisi, as mentioned by Elliot.[5] Al-Biruni's list of untouchables is more comprehensive than that of other writers. The presence of a large number of untouchables is also supported by Huen Tsang who says that : "there are also the mixed castes numerous clans formed by groups of people according to their kinds and these cannot be described."[6]

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[1] Dasharath Sharma: *Early Chauhan Dynasties, pp.* 251-252, fn. 85, p. 252 and *Rajasthan Through the Ages, pp.* 430,-432.

[2] *Rāj.*, V. 354, 389-94; VI. 182, 192.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 102; cf. Idrisi, p. 38; Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, p. 628. These writers mention them as performers and musicians. Elliot mentions them as Lahud (of Ibn Khurradadhbih, p. 16) and Zakya (of Idrisi, p. 76) as the 7th caste. Hodivala suggests that Lahud is very near to 'Lodha,' The Prākṛta form of the Saṁskṛt. Lubdhaka and is almost equivalent in meaning to Nishada, 'Man of low caste,' hunter, fowler. Hodivala identifies the Zakya of Idrisi with Zingari which is applied in various countries of Europe to the Gypsies. It is Persian 'Changi.' harper. In the Alif-Laila the male dancers are mentioned as 'Aljink'. It may be that Idrisi's 'Zakya' is a variant form of this Jink. In Central Asia, dancing girls, singing girls and prostitutes belong to this tribe of Lulis or Gypsies ' (Hodivala pp. 19-20) cf. Hobson Jobson (Ed. Crooke, 1903), p. 322.

[4] *Bṛhatkathākoṣa* 17.29, 19.17, 27.17, 74.21–22.

[5] Altekar : *Rāṣṭrakūṭas*, pp. 322-23.

[6] Marvazi, p. 123, fn. 1.

[7] R B Singh : *History of the Cāhamanas*, p. 329. cf. B.P. Majumdar : *Socio Economic History of Northern India*, p. 112. But among the class of executioners Al-Biruni mentions Cāṇḍālas (p. 102). The *Agni Purāṇa*

Though Al-Biruni's account of the castes is more informative, even he does not enumerate the intermediate castes which undoubtedly must have been many. He also does not mention any sub-divisions of the principal castes, for example, the Jāṭs and the Kāyasthas, who were prominent during his period. The Jāṭs are extensively referred to by Muslim historians and the Kāyasthas in the dynastic records of the early medieval period.

The descriptions of the early Muslim writers relating to the division of Hindu castes cannot be said to be very accurate. It seems that the group of writers comprising Ibn Khur-

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prescribes execution of criminals by Cāṇḍālas (Ch. 151. 10 f.) Gardizi, also says that they carried out punishment. (Gardizi, p. 627).

[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 102.

[2] Atri., 288-39

[3] On *Manu.*, X. 38.

[4] Sharma : *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 252 and *Rajasthan*, p. 432.

[5] C.V. Vaidya : *History of Hindu Medieval India*, Vol. III, p. 393. cf. Elliot, I, pp. 16 and 76.

[6] Watters, I, p. 168.

radadhbih had no clear–understanding of the complex Hindu social organization and its chief characteristics. Al-Biruni, who is comparatively a better authority than others, seems to have based his accounts on Hindu scriptures and not on actual observations. We are told that during the early medieval period the actual number of castes was much more then seven or sixteen. According to Kalhaṇa, there were sixty-four castes who regulated themselves during the sacrificial feast arranged by the king.[1] Vedavyāsa mentions forty,[2] Uśanas forty,[3] Medhātithi sixty[4] and Kullukabhaṭṭa sixty-four. The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa mentions forty-one mixed castes[5] and the number goes on changing from Smṛti to Smṛti. All the Smṛtis taken together mention about one hundred mixed castes.[6] Śukra thinks that it is useless and difficult to count the number of mixed castes.[7] This was due to the anuloma and pratiloma marriages as well as the intermingling of the primary anulomas and pratilomas among themselves and their marital relations with the four varṇas.[8] Al–Biruni rightly observes, "among the Hindus institutions of this kind (of castes) abound".[9] This was the age of the ramification of castes, which resulted in formation of sub–castes, therefore, it was not possible for these early Muslim writers, who were foreigners, to understand fully the intricacies of the Hindu social order. C.V. Vaidya, however, opines that their account is a 'pretty correct discription of the caste system as it existed in India in the 9th and 10th centuries.'[10]

It was one of the primary duties of Indian kings from the very beginning to uphold the Dharma. In order to maintain the varṇāśramadharma, Al-Biruni observes, "the king of antiquity, who were industriously devoted to the duties of their office, spent most of their care on the division of their subjects into different classes and orders, which they tried to preserve from intermixture and disorder. Therefore they forbade people of different classes to have intercourse with each other, and laid upon each class a particular kind of work or art and handicraft. They did not allow any body to transgress the limit of his class and even punished those who would not be content with their class."[1] It was indeed the special duty of the kings to preserve the traditional social order of society constituted by the Dharmaśāstras. Many dynasties took special pride in their efforts to maintain the purity of varṇāśrama. We have many epigraphical evidences of this period to substantiate this point. Prabhākarvardhana and Avantivarmana have been called the protectors of Varṇāśramadharma.[2] Bhāskaravarmana of Kamrupa re-established the social order and revealed the light of Āryadharma by dispelling the darkness of Kaliyuga.[3] Indrapāla also tried to maintain the Caturāśrama-varṇadharma.[4] The Pāla kings too respected and protected the Hindu social order and provided respective order to all varṇas.[5] Kṣemankara of Orissa was a staunch supporter of the varṇāśrama and it was due to his care that it was kept intact there.[6] Thus the kings tried to protect the 'purity of class and caste by ensuring that those who broke caste custom were excommunicated.'[7] The caste system in course of time became so rigid that nobody could think of protesting against it. Society took pride in its organisation. We may refer to an inscription of 1208 A.D., "Glory to Avani, the home of richmen, which protects the world by the heroism of its lords, cleanses it by the pure and brilliant life of the Brāhmaṇas, who follow the way prescribed by the revealed texts, and which gladdens it through the fragrance arising from the dalliance of its passionate youths."[1] Among other causes the matrimonial and occupational factors were largely responsible for the development of the caste system. Though marriages by and large took place within the caste, anuloma and pratiloma marriages were also contracted and they contributed their share to the growth of subcastes outside the steel frame of the varṇāśrama system. As regards the occupational aspects, even the Brāhmaṇas took to other profession. Some of the Brāhmaṇas adopted even low occupations which were not looked on with favour by the writers of Dharmaśāstra literature. In this connection the observations of Abu Zayd are informative. He writes, "Among the Indians there are men, who are devoted to religion and men of science, whom they call Brahmans. They have also their poets who live at the courts of their kings astronomers, philosophers, diviners and those who draw omen from the flight of crows etc. Among them are diviners and jugglers, who perform most astonishing feats. These observations are specially applicable to Kanauj, a large country forming the empire of Jurz.'"[2]

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[1] *Rāj*. VIII. 2407.
[2] Ch. I, vv. 10–12 (SS., p. 356).
[3] Full Ch. (SS., pp. 46–48)
[4] On *Manu.*, X, 31.
[5] *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa*, II. 13-14.
[6] Kane : *HDS.*, II, p. 57.
[7] *Śukra.*, IV. 521. cf. *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* (Ed. J.V.), I. 10–120.
[8] B.N. Sharma : *Social Life in Northern India*, p. 62.
[9] Al–Biruni, I, p. 100.
[10] C.V. Vaidya : *HMHI.*, II, p. 178.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 99-100.

[2] *EI*, IV, p 210, XXVI, p. 64.

[3] Ibid, XIX, pp. 118-20 and p. 75.

[4] *JASB*, 1897, p. 125.

[5] *EI*, XIV, p. 326; *IA*, XXI, p. 255 and p. 99.

[6] *EI*, XV, p. 3. In this way they were the protectors of the varṇāśramdharma. According to Medhātithi a Kṣatriya king should conquer the land of the Mlecchas and establish Caturvarṇa there (*on Manu.*, II. 23). To uphold Dharma constituted the meritorious conduct of a ruler. When one overstepped dharma, Indian writers consigned the ruler to hell, in spite of his royalty. cf. *Pṛthvirāja Vijaya*, VIII. 741. Sharma : *ECD*, p. 194.

[7] A.L. Basham : *The Wonder that was India*, pp. 88-89.

The Muslim Element in the Indian Population

Indo-Arab relations may be traced to the period earlier than the establishment of Islam. The merchants of both sides carried on business without any religious or political differences. But with the establishment of Muslims as a political force in Sindh in the beginning of the 8th century the relations of the two communities ceased to be friendly. The Muslims settled in large numbers in Sindh. Their outlook towards Indians was guided by their masters who acted on the behest of the Caliphs. Their hostile attitude made the Indian people change their outlook and the Muslims were regarded as 'Mlecchas'. This term had, however, been used earlier for all those foreigners who did not share the Indian way of thinking and living. In this connection Al-Biruni remarks, "On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them-against all foreigners. They call then Mleccha, i.e., impure and forbid having any connection with them, be it by intermarriage, or any other kind of relationship or by sitting, eating and drinking with them because thereby they think they would be polluted."[1] At another place he says, "All other men except the Candal, as far as they are not Hindus. are called Mlechchha, i.e., unclean all those who kill men and slaughter animals and eat the flesh of cows."[2] The Cāṇḍālas are mentioned in the ancient literature of India among the Mlecchas. They were the lowest among the low who were considered outside the social order. In the Chachnama the Muslims are called outcastes and cow-eaters.[3] In the epigraphical records too the Muslims are mentioned as Mlecchas.[4] The advance of the Muslims in the country was checked from time to time by the Indian rulers, though eventually they failed to stem its tide. In one of the Cauhana records their hatred towards them is recorded in connection with the victory of Vigraharāja IV, who claims to have "Once more made Āryāvarta what its name signifies by repeatedly exterminating the Mlechchhas (who had rendered the name meaningless by the occupation of the country)."[5] However, the Hindus are not wholly to blame for the adoption of such a contemptuous attitude towards the Turks. Al-Biruni criticises the looting and plundering of the Hindu temples

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[1] *IA*, XI, p. 221.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 10; Sulayman, p. 87; Nainar, pp. 109-116.

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1. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 19-20.
2. Ibid, II, p. 137. Al-Biruni also mentions Mlecchas applied to the Arabs, ibid, I, p. 302. Marvazi also mentions that Indians considered the Muslims as 'unclean as they eat cow's flesh, (Marvazi, p. 51 (61).
3. *Chachnama*, pp. 89, 176. cf. Elliot, I, pp. 172, 193.
4. *EI*. XVIII, p. 10.
5. *IA*, XIX, p. 218. M M. Dr. Ojha was of opinion that Mlecchas of the Rajputa records had been used for Muslims in general. (*Rajputana Ka Itihasa*, I, p. 156.)

and the insult to their gods at the hands of the Muslims and their cruel treatment of the masses. To quote him, "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country. This and other acts of Mahmud filled them with the most inveterate aversion toward all Muslims."[1] The Muslims could not be absorbed in the Hindu social order on account of their different way of life. Before the Muslims, many foreign races had come but lost their identities. Another term used for the Muslims is Turuṣka in Hindu inscriptions.[2] They had broken Hindu idols. This type of desecration is described in the Gāhaḍavāla Grant of Kumāradevī. Govinda Candra is credited to have been commissioned by Lord Mahādeva to protect Vārāṇasī from the wicked Turuṣka warrior.[3] The Pratihāras are generally described by the Muslim writers as the greatest enemies of the Arabs. However, they were successful in their attempts to conquer a large part of India and settled in the Gāhaḍvāla dominion as well as in other parts of the country ruled by different dynasties. The settlement of the Muslims is also proved by the term 'Turuṣka Daṇḍa' which was probably a kind of punitive tax levied on the Muslim settlers in the Gāhaḍavāla principality.[4] They were not always treated as enemies by the Hindus. Some of the Hindu rulers employed them in their armies. King Harṣa of Kashmir employed the Turks in his army.[5] We are also told that Dāhir had a body of 500 Arab troops in his service.[6] King Kalaśa of Kashmir employed a Turkish architect to erect a golden parasal over the temple of Kalaśeśvara.[7] The Muslim writers have recorded that the relations of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas with the Arabs were always friendly unlike the Pratihāras of

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1. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 19-22, II, p. 103. cf. Utbi, p. 308; Gardizi, pp. 71-76.
2. *EI*, XIX, p. 78; *JASB*, XXXI, p. 116; *EI*, Vol. I, p. 235, IX, pp. 74, 327.
3. *EI*, IX, p. 324, V. 16.
4. *EI*, VIII, p. 297; *JBORS*, II, Pt. IV, pp. 346, 444. cf. Niyogi : *The History of the Gāhaḍvāla Dynasty*, pp. 176-181.
5. *Raj*, VII, 1149.
6. Elliot, I, pp. 155-56.
7. *Raj*., VII, pp. 528-29.

Kanauj.[1] The Calukyas of Gujarat contributed to the building of a mosque in their kingdom.[2]

Reclamation of the Hindus

The victorious Muslims either carried a large number of Hindus as slaves to their country or forced them to accept their faith. Sometimes the alternatives placed before them were that either they should 'go to hell' or accept Islam. With the establishment of Muslim rule in Sindh, as the Muslim writers say, a large number of Hindus were converted to Islam by the victorious invaders. Some of the converted Hindus tried to escape to India. We have some references to the reclamation of Hindus who had been converted to Islam. Utbi says that "Nawasa Shah, formerly Sukhpal and one of the relations of Jaipal, who had been forcibly converted to Islam, gave up his new faith and was reconverted to Hinduism. Mahmud invaded Sukhpal, defeated him and took him imprisoner, but he did not give up his Hindu religion."[3] We are informed by Al-Baladuri that "Tanmim's successor, Hakim found that the people of Hind apostatized and returned to idolatry excepting those of Kassa, and the Muslims had no place of security in which they could live."[4] This could have been possible if the Hindus accepted them to their old faith. It seems that the reclamation of the Hindus had become a regular feature by the time of Al-Biruni, who refers, for instance, to two different ways in which the Hindus behaved towards the Hindu slaves of war. On falling into Muslim hands they were sent to Muslim countries, but later on escaped to India and wished to return to their old religion. Al-Biruni says, "I have repeatedly been told that when Hindu slaves (in Muslim countries) escape and return to their country and religion, the Hindus order that they should fast by way of expiation, then they bury them in the dung, stale and milk

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1. Elliot, II, pp. 163, 164; cf. Majumdar, A.K. : *Chalukyas of Gujrat*, pp. 331-332.
2. Elliot, I, pp. 4, 21, 23; Masudi, pp. 381, 253-54, 372.
3. Elliot, II, p. 33; cf. Gardizi, p. 59; Firishta, pp. 25-26.
4. Elliot, I, p. 126.

of cows for a certain number of days, till they get into a state of fermentation. Then they drag them out of the dirt and give them similar dirt to eat and more of the like."[1] A similar description is also provided by Mutahhar bin Tahir Maqdisi who writes, "When some body changes his religion, after having fallen in the hands of Muslim and wants to revert to his former religion, he is not killed but undergoes a religious purification. This is the procedure for that purification. The head and the whole body is shaved. Then they collect five things belonging to cow, its urine, dung, milk, curd and butter (San. Pañcagavya) which he has to eat for several days. He is then taken before a cow and asked to prostrate before it."[2] In this connection Gardizi writes that no Brāhmaṇa could cross the Gaṅgā. It was forbidden by law not to reach to any one who was not of their seed (dhurn yat). Whoever had left their religion was not readmitted except after he had made himself clean and they had purified him. The purification consisted in shaving his head, his beard, his eye-brows and eye-lashes, and any hair on his body. Then they collected five things : cow-dung, cow's urine, milk and butter and water of Gaṅgā and mixed all five, giving them to drink in a copper bowl to the amount of one rital of the same water they poured on his head, after which they rubbed (tala) his body, and thus for ten days in proportion to his rebellion and his neglect of religion. Then he approached a cow and prostrated himself before her.[3] This is also confirmed by the contemporary Smṛti writers who prescribe reconversion to the Hindu fold. Deval, who wrote his Smṛti in Sindh, refers to persons whose parents had embraced the Mleccha religion as well as to such women as had been ravished and had also conceived. Purificatory rites are prescribed by the Smṛti for persons who returned to their country from the Mlecchadeśa.[4] The Smṛti also mentions fasts like those of Candrāyaṇa and Paraka, and Padakrochra and the use of cow urine and cow dung.[1] This supports Al-Biruni's statement. As regards the women abducted by the Mlecchas, Atri, Parāśara and the Agni Purāṇa provide for their restoration to the society.[2] Devala forbids visits to some frontier provinces like Sindh, Sauvīra, Saurāṣṭra, borderlands, Kaliṅga, Koṅkaṇa and Vaṅga, which one could do only on pain of performing Śuddhi on return.[3] This also cofirnms Al-Biruni's remark that the Brāhmaṇas were forbidden to cross the rivers Sindh in the north and Carmanvati in the South. He was also not allowed to cross either of these frontiers so as to enter the country of the Turks or of the Karnata.[4] However, Devala is liberal and discusses the problem of reconversion at great length and extends the limit of purification to twenty-five years.[5]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 162-63.

[2] Maqdisi, IV, p. 13.

[3] Gardizi, p. 631.

[4] *Devala Smṛti*, vv. 47-48.

Nevertheless, the orthodox section of the society had begun to hesitate about the readmission of converts within its fodl. Al-Biruni was told that even after expiation a Brāhmaṇa could not be taken back and there was no expiation possible for such an individual and that he was never allowed to return into those conditions of life in which he was before. Such an expiation was said to be impossible, if a Brāhmaṇa ate even in the house of a Śūdra for sundry days. He was expelled from his caste and could never regain it.[6] No doubt Al-Biruni's statement clearly shows the actual state of things. The Hindus, from the very beginning, as noted by Muslim writers, were conservative in outlook. The growing notion of purity and various types of purification or expiation tended to make reconversion extremely difficult. It was one of the reasons for the rapid growth of Islam and for the establishment of Muslim rule in India. The Hindus were following a 'strange path of narrowness and spirit of exclusiveness.' The remark

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1. Ibid, vv. 7-10
2. *Atri Saṁhitā*, vv. 197-98 (*SS*, p. 18); *Atri Smṛti*, ch. V. 2-3 (*SS*, p. 30); *Parāśara*, X. 23-25; *Agnī Purāṇa*, ch. 165, vv. 6-7.
3. *Devala Smṛti*, v. 17.
4. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 162-163.
5. *Devala Smṛti*, v. 55.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 163.

of Professor Habib and others that the Hindu society had a narrow outlook and was intolerant towards the low castes, which led to its defeat, suffers from an exaggeration and yet it underlines the fact that the Hindu social organisation lacked cohesion and strength and it had left a large segment in a sad plight.[1]

The Asramas

There were two main elements of the social organisation, one of which was varṇa, and the other āśrama or stage of life. The division of life into four stages was a very old system evolved by the Āryans. From the very beginning the number of Āśramas has been four, though there are slight differences in the nomenclature and in their sequence.[2] These were Brahmacarya, Gārhasthya, Vānaprastha and Sannyāsa. Twenty five years were allotted to each stage on the basis of hundred years' span of life. They were observed according to the Dharmaśāstra by a Dvija or twice-born. There may be doubt as to how much it was actually observed.[3] It is possible that the Brāhmaṇas at least in limited number practised it.

Among Muslim writers, only Al-Biruni gives a detailed account of the four stages of life.[4] He mentions these stages only in respect of the Brāhmaṇas, we may presume that very few of other two castes, viz., the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas followed them. Their occupation probably was responsible for leaving the ideal scheme. At least the first two of the āśramas were generally followed by every Dvija. The Śūdras, however, were not allowed to enter any stage except that of the householder. Al-Biruni's account of these āśramas is undoubtedly taken from the Dharmaśāstras[5] and not drawn from actual life. Though we have a few epigraphical references[1] to these āśramas and the Smṛtis of our period mention them accordingly, we may conclude that to some extent they ware followed by at least a section of the society. Before entering the first stage of life a Brāhmaṇa boy of eight years was invested with a pair of the sacred thread.[2] Now he became a Brahmacārin which was the beginning of the first stage of life. Al-Biruni gives very elaborate rules and regulations governing the whole life of a Brāhmaṇa divided into the four āśramas.

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[1] Elliot, II (Ed. Aligarh), Introduction. *The Delhi Sultanate*, Introduction, Nizami : *Some Aspects of Religion and Politics on the 13th Century*. Aziz Ahmad : *The Early Turkish Empire*, Introduction.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 416-417.

[3] Basham : *The Wonder that was India*, p. 159.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 130-133.

[5] In this connection Al-Biruni follows the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Book III*, ch. IX and *Manu*.

BRAHMACARYA

The first period of the Brāhmaṇas life extends till the twenty-fifth year of his age, or according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, till his forty-eight year. His duty is to practise abstinence,[3] to make the earth his bed, to begin with the learning of the Veda and of its explanation, of the science of theology and law, all this being taught to him by a master whom he serves day and night. He washes himself thrice a day and performs a sacrifice to the fire both at the beginning and end of the day. After the sacrifice he worships his master.[4] He fasts a day and he breaks fast a day, but he is never allowed to eat meat. He dwells in the house of the master, which he only leaves in order to ask for a gift and to beg in not more than five houses once a day, either at noon or in the evening whatever alms he receives he places before his master to choose from it what he likes. Then the master allows him to take the remainder. Thus the pupil nourishes himself from the remains of the dishes of his master. Further, he fetches the wood for the fire, wood of two kinds of trees, palāsa (Butea fondosa) and darbha in order to perform the sacrifice.[5] Undoubtedly the whole account of Al-Biruni relating to the first stage of life is based on the study of the Purāṇas and Smṛtis like Manu in which the life of a Brahmacārī has bean described in detail.[1] As regards the study of the Vedas, we have some epigraphic references also. A Brahmacārī, Vāsudeva by name, is mentioned in a grant of Bhojadeva of Kanauj who devoted his time to the study of Āśvalāyana Sūkta.[2] In one inscription it is mentioned that Brahmacārī of Vājasneya school was granted a gift of village.[3] The life long Brahmacārīs, who devoted their whole life to study, are also mentioned in a Cauhāna record.[4]

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[1] The *Goharwa plate* of Karṇadeva mentions the four Āśramas (*EI*, XI, p. 144).

[2] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 130-131. cf. *Manu.*, II. 173.

[3] *Baudhāyana*, I. 2, 21-2, 25.

[4] *Mbh.*, *Śānti.*, 191.8; *Manu.*, II. 109, 176; *Yāj.*, *Brahmacārīdharma Prakaraṇa*, 25-27.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 131.

GARHASTHYA

The second period of his life extended from the twenty-fifth year to the fiftieth. Soon after his return to his paternal home the young Brāhmaṇa proceeded to many with the permission of his teacher but he was not allowed to marry a girl of more than twelve years of age.[5] He lived by asking a gift or present or fee obtained for teaching the Brāhmaṇas or Kṣatriyas. Lastly he lived from what he gathered on the earth or from the trees.[6] His last duty was to beat the drum before fire and recite the prescribed holy texts.[7] The description of the second stage can be confirmed with the rules and regulations prescribed by Manu for a householder.[8]

VANAPRASTHA

The third stage of the Brāhmaṇa's life extended from the fiftieth year to the seventy-fifth year. This stage was called Vānaprastha. His wife could accompany him to the forest or remain behind with his sons. He led the same life as he had done before in the first period. He clothed himself in barks of trees or skins. He let his hair and nails grow, lived on

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1. *Manu*, ch. II.
2. *EI*, V, p. 212.
3. *ASIAR*, 1902-3, pp. 237, 255.
4. *EI*, II, p. 123.
5. See The Age of Marriage.
6. See, The occupations of the Brāhmaṇas, pp. 36-44.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 132.
8. *Manu*., ch. II and IV.

fruits, plants and roots of the forest, and slept on the ground. He did not anoint himself with oil.[1] Perhaps this order was never universally recognised.[2]

SANNYASA

The fourth period extends till the end of life. He wears a red garment and holds a stick in his hand. He is always given to meditation, he strips the mind of friendship and enmity and roots out desire and lust, and wrath. He does not converse with any body at all. When walking to a place of a particular merit in order to gain a heavenly reward, he does not stop on the road in a village longer than a day, nor a city longer than five days. If any one gives him something he does not leave a remainder of it for the following day. He has no other business but of caring for the path which leads to salvation, and for reaching 'mokṣa', whence there is no return to this world.[3] This stage was that of a Bhikṣu, Yati, Sannyāsin, Paribrājaka or Pravarajita. We may refer here to the accounts of Sulayman which describe a life similar to that of a Sannyāsin, as given by Al-Biruni. Sulayman writes that in India there were men who wandered in the forests and mountains and rarely associated with men. They ate occasionally dry herbs and fruits which were available in the forests. They also fixed iron ring round the copulatory organ, so that they might not have relation with women. Some of them were quite naked or had only a leopard's skin thrown over them and in that posture kept standing with their faces turned to the sun. He wondered after seeing the Sannyāsi in the same posture after sixteen years, and was surprised that his eyes had not melted by the heat of the sun.[4]

These accounts show that some people renounced the world. The Dharmasūtras prescribe a code of standard conduct for a Sannyāsin. He was required to lead a life of complete detachment from the world, contentment, self-abnegation and meditation. Pleasure and pain had no meaning for him. He was advised to be a well-wisher of all living beings, he should neither be afraid of nor frighten to any creature.[1] He should always devote himself to the realization of the self through meditation and austerities.[2] To quote Āpastamba, "It is ordained that he shall wear, clothes thrown away by others. Some hold that he is free from all (forms of morals and manners, so he may go about naked) that he should seek to realize the self, renouncing truth and falshood, pleasure and pain, the Vedas, the world and the next one, that he attains salvation after knowing the self (Buddha). But this view is contrary to the teachings of the scriptures (Śāstras), for, if salvation could be attained by mere knowledge of the self, the knower of the self should not feel any pain in this world.[3]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 132-133.

[2] Jolly : *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 325.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 133.

[4] Sulayman, p. 32. cf. Nainar, pp. 118-119.

Both the accounts of Al-Biruni and Sulayman mention that the Sannyāsis lived in the forests or mountains. But during the period from 800 to 1200 A.D. we are informed that there were numerous monastic establishments and Hindu Sannyāsins lived in the maṭhas attached mostly to the Śiva temples and shrines. It need not be pointed out that Śiva is Mahāyogin. His worship in the form as Śivaliṅga was well-established during this period. He was the patron deity of Sannyāsins. They worshipped Śiva and their maṭhas were attached to the Śaiva shrines.[4] Sulayman's account of the Sannyāsin may have reference to a 'haṭhyogī'. As regards the red dress, we may point out that Kāṣāya (garments of reddish colour) was used by Buddhist monks.[5] The garment of saffron colour was used by the Hindu Daṇḍin Sannyāsins.

The whole account of Al-Biruni regarding the Āśrama system is almost on traditional lines. According to it, in the first stage a boy after Upanayana studied the Vedas and other sacred works under the guidance of a teacher. With the permission of his teacher the student married and entered the second stage of his life. As a house-holder he was to continue progeny, offer charity, give alms and perform sacrifices. Then he renounced the world and entered the third stage of life. He went to forest for medation. Indeed it was a period of preparation for the final stage of life, i.e., Sannyāsa, which required complete renunciation and dettachment from the world. In this stage of life a person subjected himself to self-mortification and asceticism, and tried to comprehend the Divine Reality. While wandering from place to place he tried to seek salvation. It would not be out of place to remark that, like the caste system, the system of āśramas was not followed strictly. It represented an ideal, rather than a reality. It seems that in practice it was followed by a small number of people, mainly from the Brāhmaṇa varṇa. Al-Biruni associates these āśramas only with the life of a Brāhmaṇa, which supports the above remark.

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[1] *Gaut. Dh.S.*, III.11-25; *Baudh. Dh.S.*, II.6,11.18-28, II.10.17.1-40. *Āp. Dh.S.*, II.9.2.7-17. cf. *Manu.*, VI.33-85. *Yāj.*, III.56-65.

[2] *Manu.*, VI. 45.

[3] *Āpastamba Dh.S.*, II.9.21.11-16.

[4] Upadhyaya, V. : *Socio-Religious Condition*, pp. 112-15.

[5] Takakusu, p. 54. Civara was also another name.

A general picture of the society is depicted in an inscription, which records that the fame of Harṣa, the Candella ruler, had spread, "in the halls of princes, where sages dwell, where good people meet in the village, in the assemblages of the lowly, among the rows of shops of merchants, where streets cross, where wanderers talk together on the road, and in the huts of the dwellers of the forest."[1] Making allowance for its too generalised character, we may remark that the description has reference to the various professions adopted by the people.

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[1] *EI*, I, pp. 128-129.

CHAPTER II

THE POSITION OF CASTES

The castes in ancient India were differentiated according to their occupations, duties and privileges, though the traditional theory relating to the professions of the castes was not strictly observed. In our period we have instances of numerous castes and sub-castes following several other professions. However, the castes mentioned by Muslim writers had been following professions very nearly resembling those sanctioned by the Hindu scriptures. A number of important occupations had become the monopoly of certain castes. In this connection Sulayman observes, "In all these kingdoms the sovereign power resides in the royal family and never departs from it and those of this family succeed each other. In like manner there are families of learned men of physicians and of all the artificers concerned in architecture and none of these ever mixed with in a family of profession different from their own."[1] Al-Masudi confirms this statement of hereditary professions. He says, "Royalty is limited to the descendants of one family and never goes to another. The same is the case with the families of wazirs, kazis and other high officers. They are all hereditary and never changed or altered."[2] On the merit of following one's own profession, Al-Biruni quotes from the Gītā, "If each member of these castes adheres to his customs and usages, he will obtain the happiness he wishes for...." But if any body wants to quit the works and duties of his caste and adopts those of another caste it is a sin, because it is a transgression of the rule.[3] Perhaps the Brāhmaṇas had the liberty to take to the profession of the lower castes, besides those that were theoretically permitted to them. But there were some moral restrictions, for Al-Biruni says that, "every man who takes to some occupation which is not allowed to his caste, e.g., a Brāhmaṇa to trade, a Śūdra to agriculture, commits a sin or crime, which they consider only a little less than the crime of theft."[1] He also writes that the Hindus give to every single man of the four castes characteristic names, according to their occupations and modes of life.[2] In spite of injunction that members of different castes should follow the occupations associated with their own castes, members of the higher castes were allowed to adopt the occupations of the lower castes. In our period of study people had been performing the duties of other castes, which were not allowed to them in the ordiary course.

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[1] Sulayman, p. 32; Elliot, I, p. 6.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 20.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 103. cf. *Gītā*, XVIII, 45-46; *Arthśāstra*, I. 3-4.

THE BRAHMANAS

High Positon in Society

In the caste hierarchy the Brāhmaṇas were at the top. They occupied the highest position in the social organisation. They had gained complete ascendancy in society and were held in high esteem. Their pre-eminence in the social order has been well noticed by Muslim writers. Abu Zayd says that they were 'men of piety and learned' among the Indian people.[3] Idrisi mentions them as men of 'religious caste and devotees of India.'[4] Marvazi adds that 'they have leadership under the kings.'[5] Masudi remarks that the Brāhmaṇas are honoured by Indians as 'they are the highest and the most noblest caste.'[6] Al-Biruni also states that they are considered 'the very best of mankind' and were not like other castes 'bound to pay taxes and perform services to the king.'[7] They were "specially trained for preserving and maintaining their religion."[1] The Chinese pilgrims also record their high social status among the Indian. Hsuan Tsang says that among various castes in India they were regarded as the purest and most esteemed. On account of their excellent reputation India was called 'the country of the Brahmins.'[2] I-tsing also recognises them as the most honourable throughout the five parts of India and are regarded as 'devas.'[3] Ibn Battuta, the Moroccan traveller, also remarks that they were "the chiefs of the Hindus and were venerated by the infidels."[4] The Brāhmaṇas had gained high social status from the very beginning. The Dharmaśāstras speak highly of them. In the Taittirīya Saṁhitā they are said to be the foremost among the three varṇas (dvijas).[5] In the Gṛhyasūtras it was laid down that a person going in the chariot should get down from it when he approaches the Brāhmaṇas.[6] Parāśara advises Kṣatriyas to obey and Śūdras to serve the Brāhmaṇas.[7] According to Śaṅkha, the Brāhmaṇa enjoyed precedence on the road even over the ruler.[8] In the Karpūramañjarī a maid servant speaks of the high position of a Brāhmaṇa thus, "There is no rivalling you, for you though unlettered as an iron beam of a goldsmith's balance, are employed as a part of a balance for weighing jewels while I, though lettered, like a common (balance) am not employed in the weighing of gold."[9] The birth of Brāhmaṇas has been associated with divine origin, as Al-Biruni writes, "That they were created from the head of Brahman. . . .and the head is the highest part of the animal body, the Brāhmaṇa are the choice part of the whole genus."[1] Al-Masudi also says that they were regarded as the descendants of al-Brahman (Brahma).[2] In the Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa we are told that "since he was created from the mouth, therefore the Brāhmaṇa shows his might by his mouth."[3] Secondly, because of their pure living, devotion to religion and learning, they occupied the highest position in society. Being 'learned among the people of India,' remarks Abu Zayd, 'they are devotees, doctors, poets, astrologers and philosophers."[4] Al-Biruni also refers to this fact and he quotes from the Gītā, in which some moral qualities of the Brāhmaṇas have been mentioned. He writes, "The Brāhmaṇas must have an ample intellect, a quiet heart, truthful speech, much patience, he must be master of his senses, a lover of justice, of evident purity, always directed upon worship entirely bent upon religion."[5] Hsuan Tsang also mentions that "these keep their principles and live contently, strictly observing ceremonial purity."[6] The Mahābhārata is full of praise for their nobility, pure living, high thinking and devotion towards learning.[7] It is therefore quite natural that they were preferred to other castes. Quoting Yama, Yājñavalkya, Vasiṣṭha, the Mahābhārata and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Lakṣmīdhara in his Dānakāṇḍa states that "the ideal Brāhmaṇa donee should be devoted to the Vedic studies, chaste, truthful serene, afraid of sin, practise ahiṁsa, keep burning the sacred fires, scrupulously observe the religious vows, love the cows and be free from greed."[8] From the Chachnama we learn that due to their high birth and social status they enjoyed pre-eminence in the society. They were proud as well as con-

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 137. cf. "It is better (to discharge) one's own (appointed) duty incompletely than to perform completely that of another; for he who lives according to the law of another (caste) is instantly excluded from his own (*Manu.*, X 97).

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

[3] Sulayman, pp. 86-87; Nainar, p. 129.

[4] Idrisi, p. 37; Nainar, p. 130.

[5] Marvazi, p. 39; cf. Gardizi, p. 627.

[6] Masudi, I, p, 154; Elliot, I, p. 19.

[7] Al-Biruni, I, p. 101; II, p. 132, I, p. 39.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 101; II, p. 132; I, p. 39.

[2] Watters, I, p. 140.

[3] Takakusu, pp. 24 and 182. cf. "Brāhmaṇas are gods that are directly seen". *Tait. S.*, I.7.3.1. "There are two kinds of gods. For indeed the gods are gods and the Brāhmaṇas who have studied and teach the sacred lore are the human gods." *Śat. Br.*, *SBE*, XII, p. 309; XXVI, p. 341.

[4] Ibn Battuta (Tr. H.A.R. Gibb, London, 1957), pp. 119, 234.

[5] *Tait. Saṁhitā*, II.6.2.5; V.2.7.1.

[6] *Pārāśara Gṛhya Sūtra*; III.14.8.

[7] *Parāśara Smṛti*, VIII.33; *Laghu Āśvalāyana Smṛti*, XXII.1.

[8] *HDS*, II, p. 147.

[9] *Karpūramañjarī* (*HOS*), p. 232; cf. Act I, pp. 20-21.

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 101.
2. Masudi, I, p 154.
3. *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa*, XI. 1.2.
4 Sulayman, p. 87; Elliot, I. p. 10.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 103; cf. *Gītā*, XVIII. 41-45.
6. Watters. I, p. 168.
7. *Mahābhārata. Udyoga Parva*, 40.25.
8. *Kṛtyakalpataru, Dānakāṇḍam (GOS)* pp. 26-27; cf. *Gṛhastha Kāṇḍam*, pp 171-179. *Sirpur Stone Inscription, EI*, XI. 192-193.

scious of their high birth and family and were thus considered superior to the rest of the population. Even Kasim maintained their dignity and passed orders confirming their pre-eminence.[1] Thus on account of their noble character and the ideal pursuit of life they enjoyed an excellent reputation, commanded respect and reverence and established their predominance in the society. Such noble and large-hearted Brāhmaṇas were really qualified 'leaders and guides.'[2]

Classification of the Brahmanas

Early Muslim writers do not provide definite information regarding the classification or characteristic names of the Brāhmaṇas. The epigraphic records mention the Gotra, Pravara and Śākhās of the Brāhmaṇa donees. Besides, they seem to have characteristic names according to their occupation, mode of life and place of residence. In this connection Al Biruni says that "the Brāhmaṇa is in general called by this name as long as he does his work staying at home. When he is busy with the service of one fire he is called isthin; if he serves three fires he is called agnihotrin; if he besides offers an offering to the fire he is called diksita."[3] In our times too there are Iṣṭhin (Avasthī), Agnihotrī and Dīxit sub-castes of the Brāhmaṇas.

Another class of Brāhmaṇas was known as Śakadvīpī. Originally they were called Maga Brāhmaṇas or Bhojakas, who were certainly outsiders.[4] After leaving their original home in Persia, they came to Śakadvīpa (Scythia) from where they migrated to India. They were specially sun-worshippers and held the office of the priest of the deity sun.[5] About the Persian priest Magians Al Biruni writes, "There are some magians upto the present time in India where they are called Mag."[6] Their migration towards India is also pro-

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1. *Chachnama*, pp. 168-169; Elliot, p. 183.
2. *Chachnama*, p. 44.
3. Al-Biruni, I, p. 207.
4. Sharma : *Early Chauhana Dynasties*, p. 240, fn. 15.
5. R.G. Bhandarkar : *Vaisnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems* pp. 218-222.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 21.

ved by Govindapur Inscription dated Śaka era 1059 (1137 A.D.), according to which the Maga Brāhmaṇas (a race of dvija) were brought from Śakadvīpa by Samb.[1] Besides sun-worship, their chief profession was probably astrology.[2] Sun-worship had become their monopoly.[3] Many of them, as Jain inscriptions inform us, associated themselves even with the worship of Jain gods and goddesses.[4] Even these days they perform this duty in most Jain temples of Bikaner. Dr. Sharma thinks that this also indicates that they were originally of non-Brahmanic character.[5] They first came to Multan from Śakadvīpa and settled there in large number and attached themselves as priests with the famous Sun Temple of that city. Al-Biruni again confirms their close association with the priest of Sun deity. He says that the priest, to minister the idol of the sun, belonged to the class of people called Mag, i.e., the Magians.[6] This is also confirmed by Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, which mentions the connection of the Magas with sun worship. Probably the Śakadivi-Devalak Brāhmaṇas (who were also associated with astrology) and astrologers were treated as degraded Brāhmaṇas.[7] Their close connection with sun worship is confirmed. During the early medieval period sun worship was in vogue. The most famous centre of sun worhip during this period was at Multan. Its Sun temple is described by Hsuan Tsang,[8] Abu Zayd,[9] Al-Masudi,[10] Ibn Hauqal,[11] Al-Istakhari[12] and Ibn Rusta.[13] Among these, Al-Biruni gives in detail the history of the temple and the installation of the Sun-idol in it. The Hindus of Multan had a festival called Sambapur-yatra in honour of the deity. Al-Biruni names the deity Āditya.[1] Qalqashaundi specially mentions the Brāhmaṇas of Kanauj as the priestly class of India. He calls the City of Kanauj as the City of the Brāhmaṇas.[2] Even these days the Kanaujia Brāhmaṇas are highly respected and consider themselves a superior community among the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas of Kanauj migrated towards many parts of India in the early medieval period.[3] Learned Brāhmaṇas from Madhyadesha were generally invited to Bengal and other parts of the country.[4]

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[1] *EI*, II, p. 330.

[2] Sharma : op.cit., pp. 240-41, fn. 15, p. 240.

[3] *Bṛhtsaṁhitā*, 60.19. Varāhamihira was probably a Maga Brāhmaṇa. Bhojaka Tāraka, an astronomer, is mentioned in the *Harṣacarita* as Maga (p. 128, N. Sagara).

[4] P.C. Nahar : *Jain Inscriptions*, pt. I, p. 198.

[5] Sharma, op cit., p. 241.

[6] Al-Biruni, I, p. 121.

[7] *Bṛhddharma Purāṇa*, *Uttarakāṇḍa*, ch. XIII. 15.21. ch. XIV. 66-67.

[8] Beal : *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p 152.

[9] Elliot, I, p. 11

[10] Al-Masudi, Elliot, I, p. 23.

[11] *Bulletin of the Institute of Islamic Studies*, Number 5, 1961, pp. 20-21.

[12] Elliot, I, pp. 27-28; *BI. of Islamic Studies*, pp. 9-10.

[13] *Geographer*, 7, N. 1, 1955, pp. 53-54.

Occupations of Brahmanas

For their livelihood the Brāhmaṇas adopted varied types of occupations. In this connection Al-Biruni informs us, "The universal duties of the Brahman throughout his whole life are works of piety, giving alms and receiving them. For that which the Brahmans give reverts to the pitras (is in reality a benefit to the Fathers). He must continually read, perform the sacrifices, take care of the fire which he lights, offer before it, worship it, and preserve it from being extinguished that he may be burned by it after his death. It is called 'homa'."[5] The Kathāsaritsāgara mentions Brāhmaṇas engaged in daily sacrifices and performing other rites and keeping up sacrificial fires in their homes.[6] Some of the pro-

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 116-117, 121. cf. Istakhari who writes, "(In the past) whenever (the neighbouring) Indians went there with the intention of invading them (the priests of the temple) and taking away the idol from them, they brought the idol (out of the temple) and threatened to break it and burn it" (*The Bulletin*, p. 10). This clearly shows that how deeply the temple was venerated by the Hindus.
2. Otto Spie, *Al-Qalqashandi : Subh-ul-Asha*, p. 397.
3. *JBORS*, II, p. 405; *EI*, XV, p. 298; XXIX, p. 56; IA, XXI, pp. 97-101.
4. Cf. Vasudeva Upadhyay : *Socio Religious Condition of Northern India*, pp. 34-43.
5. Al-Biruni, II, p. 133. Lakṣmīdhara suggests that a Brāhamaṇa should perform 'homa' and 'yajña' to secure victory over an enemy in the battlefield. *Kṛtyakalpataru, Rājadharmakāṇḍa* p. 106.
6. *KSS*, CXXV, 91; LXXVII. 3; LXXIII. 58; LVI. 177. *The Sirpur Stone Inscription* and Lakṣmidhara mention that it was one of

fessions mentioned by Al-Biruni had been practised by them from the very beginning, and have been prescribed in the Dharmaśāstras also. Teaching and priesthood were the hereditary occupations of the Brāhmaṇas.[1] Adhyāpana (teaching), pratigrah (accepting gifts) and yajña (conducting sacrifices) were special occupations of the Brāhmaṇas.[2] Al-Biruni says that the Brāhmaṇas taught the Vedas to the Kṣatriyas.[3] One of the duties of the Kings was to maintain the Śrotriyas, i.e., Brāhmaṇas learned in the Vedas.[4] The epigraphic evidences also confirm the statement of Al-Biruni. They were generally engaged in the performance of the sixfold duties, and were ever ready to expound the Vedas, the Vedāṅgas, Itihāsa, the Purāṇas and Mīmāṁsā.[5] The inscriptions mention the following sixfold duties : Yajña (sacrificing for themselves), Yājana (sacrificing for others), Adhyayana (studying the Vedas), Adhyāpana (teaching), Dāna, (giving alms), and Parigraha (Accepting gifts).[6] Thus it is clear that they had been living in conformity with the rules laid down in the Dharmaśāstras.[7] As they constituted the religious section of the Hindu society, they have attracted the attention of early Muslim writers.[8]

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the duties of the Brāhmaṇas to keep burning sacred fire. *EI*, XI, pp. 192-193. *Kṛtyakalpataru*, *Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, Brāhmaṇakarmadharmavṛttis. According to the opinion of Padmanābha there were 45000 learned Brāhmaṇas in Bhillamala, who daily performed sacrifices with offering's made to all gods, beginning with Indra. Sharma : *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p. 289.

1. *Gaut. Dh S.*, 1.2; *Baudh. D.S.*, I. 10.18.2; *Vasi.*, II. 14.
2. *Atri Smṛti*, 13 (SS, p. 5); *Śaṁkha Smṛti*, I.22 (SS, p. 379).
3. Al-Biruni, I, p. 125.
4. *Manu.*, VII. 134; *Yāj.*, III, 44; Atri. 24.
5. *EI*, XX, pp. 126-128.
6. *EI*, *I.* p 146, V, p. 53, XI, p. 306, XII, p. 203, XX, p. 128; *Ind, Ante* . XVII, p. 226. cf. *Viśaladeva Raso*, I. 22,37,54-55 and IV.11; *Kanhadadeprabandha*, II, vv. 22-27.
7. *Atri.*, 13; *Vasiṣṭha.*, 20.
8. Sulayman, pp. 86-87; Nainar, p. 129; Idrisi, p. 37; Nainar, p. 130; Marvazi, p. 39. cf. Gardizi, p. 627; Masudi, I, p. 154; Elliot, I, p. 19; Al-Biruni, I, P 101, II, p. 149. "Their content leads to the increase of dignity and rank, and to the perpetuation of greatness and magnificence." *Chachnama*, p. 44.

Brāhmaṇas and teaching had been closely related since the very early times. Manu says that the study and teaching of the Vedas was the highest 'dharma' of the Brāhmaṇas.[1] Yājñavalkya observes that the creator created the Brāhmaṇas for the preservation of the Vedas.[2] They had complete hold on the teaching of the Vedas.[3] Therefore this became their hereditary profession.[4] Since the teaching profession alone could not suffice for their maintenance a large number of the Brāhmaṇas adopted the occupation of priests, i.e., Purohitas. They were attached to the royal houses and temples. In this connection Al-Qalqashandi (though he is not directly related with our period) remarks on the basis of the 'taqwim-ul-Buldem' that the Brāhmaṇas are the priestly class of India.[5] Other Muslim writers have also pointed out that they are men of the religious class, and worship idols.[6] Writing about this class of the Brāhmaṇas, Al-Biruni says, "He gets his sustenance . . . by presents which he receives from some one, because he performs for him the sacrifices to the fire . . There is always a Brahmana in the house of those people who there administers the affairs of religion and the work of piety. He is called 'Purohita'."[7] He further remarks that some of them had been maintaining sacred fires and performing various sacrifices prescribed for them. They were called iṣṭhin, agnihotrin, dīkṣit.[8] The epigraphic records of various dynasties also testify that the Brāhmaṇas were engaged in performing sacrifices for the king. They were commonly called Purohita, Mahāpurohita and Rājaguru.[9] The Harṣacarita says that they were very punctual in offering sacrifices and observing other rites.[1] According to the Mahāvīracarita the Brāhmaṇas of Sāketa carried with themselves vessals for the Vājapeya sacrifice. Lakṣmīdhara devotes a full chapter to sacrifices, specially performed by the purohitas to ward off calamities in a kingdom.[2] Those who took to the priestly profession in the royal houses were highly respected in society. One of the Gāhadavāla Inscriptions mentions a Brāhmaṇa donee as an outstanding purohita in the social order.[3] The kings gave donations to such purohitas as Jagusarman and Devavara.[4] The Muslim writers do not mention priests belonging to castes other than the Brāhmaṇas. They suggest that such types of professions were hereditary in one family and never went out of it.[5] Priesthood, like teaching, had been a hereditary occupation of the Brāhmaṇas since very ancient times.[6] Jaimini and Kātyāyana Śrautsūtra debar Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas from officiating as priests, which was the exclusive privilege of a Brāhmaṇa.[7]

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[1] *Manu.*, IV. 147; cf. *Gaut.*, IX. 72.

[2] *Yāj.*, I. 198.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 125, II, p. 136.

[4] Kane : *HDS*, II. pp. 38, 105-108.

[5] *Subh-ul-Asha (Tr.)* Otto Spie, p. 39.

[6] See, the classification of the castes and position of the Brāhmaṇas.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 131-132. cf. *The Pratapgarh* Inscription of Mahīpāla II of the Pratihāra dynasty was written by Trivikrama, who was a purohita. *EI*. XIV. 182.

[8] Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

[9] *EI.*, I.136, IV.97, XII.8, XVI.92, XII.141, VII.99, XVIII.222, XIX.17 and *JROS*, VII.47.

The Rajaput Kings were also generous in the construction of temples and making grants for Bali (offering) and Charu (oblation) and for the upkeep of temples.[8] Naturally a large number of Brāhmaṇas were attached to the temples as priests. From Muslim writers we know that the temples engaged many priests to perform daily rituals concerning the deity. Al-Biruni mentions that the priests attached to the temples of Viṣṇu and Sun were called Bhāgavata and Maga, i.e., Magians, respectively.[9] The Hudud-ul-Alam informs us that large numbers of Brāhmaṇas were engaged in the temples of Qandahar H-Manam and S.Labur near Kanauj.[1] We are told by Al-Qazwini that a thousand Brāhmaṇas were employed in the worship of the idols and attending the visitors at the doors of the great temple of Somanātha, and all were maintained by the endowments of the temple.[2] It is said that it was endowed with 10,000 villages, whose revenue was spent on its maintenance. There were one thousand Brāhmaṇas to perform the elaborate ritual and to admit worshippers to the sanctuary.[3] Gardizi also informs us that when Mahmud approached the city of Somanātha he was seen by the Brāhmaṇas and the Śramaṇas, who all busied themselves worshipping the idols.[4] From the Chachnama we learn that when Kasim invaded Sindh, the priests became poor, because the people, through fear of Muslims, did not continue their offerings. Therefore, the priests approached Kasim requesting him to allow the people to visit temples and make their offerings on which their living depended.[5]

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[1] *Harṣacarita*, ch. III, p. 86.

[2] *Kṛtyakalpataru, Rājadharma*, p. 176. cf. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* condemns those who were ignorant of Vedic lore (*Rāj*. VI. 276).

[3] *EI*, IV, 129.

[4] H.C. Ray : *DHNI*, I, pp. 516-18,521,524-25, 536 and 512. cf. *Revised list of Antiquarian Remains of Bombay Presidency*, p. 329, for the donations made to the Gujarati Purohitas.

[5] Elliot, I, pp. 6,20.

[6] *Gaut*. D S., 1.2; *Baudh*. *D*.*S*., I.10,18.2; *Vas*. *D*.*S*., II,14.

[7] *Jaimini*, VI.6.18; *Kātyāyana Śrautsūtra*, I.2.28.

[8] *EI*, XIX.120,124,178; VI.16; VII.59, IX.13,325; XVII.322; I.173; XXVI.270.

[9] Al-Biruni, I, p. 121.

Many Brāhmaṇa priests performed rites on the occasions of birth and mourning and were paid for the duties performed.[6] We are told that the Sun-temple af Multan was greatly venerated by the Hindus who made generous offerings to the temple. There were ministers (priests) to worship the Sun-deity.[7] The largest part of the revenues of the king of Multan was derived from the rich presents, including purealoe wood offered by the Hindu pilgrims of distant places.[8] The pilgrims brought to it vast sums of money, which they expended upon the temple and on those who led a life of devotion.[1] The Rājataraṅgiṇī mentions that the priests enjoyed the revenue of the villages that belonged to the temples.[2] They had other sources of income. Sometimes they sold the aloes offered by the pilgrims to merchants. They were very costly and were in great demand, says Abu Zayd.[3] The Rājataraṅgiṇī further informs us that the priests sold flowers, incense, etc., to persons who visited the temple for worship.[4] Kṣemendra provides an interesting piece of information regarding the priests, who at times sold the sweets, etc., which were offered to the deity.[5]

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[1] *Hudud-ul-Alam*, pp. 88-90.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 98.

[3] Nazim : *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 211. cf. Al-Biruni, II, p. 103. Ibnul Athir, IX. 241. Utbi (Tr. Sharma), p. 62.

[4] Gardizi (Tr. Sharma), pp. 84-85.

[5] *Chachnama*, pp. 167-168.

[6] Ibid, p. 168.

[7] Elliot, I, p. 11.

[8] Ibid, I, p. 23.

The temple priests were not held in great esteem. Manu says that a Devalaka (the temple priest) who takes fee for performing rites before the idol in a temple for three successive years was unfit to be invited at a Śrāddha or to officiate at sacrifices to gods.[6] The less educated earned their living by reciting Svastivācana (benedictory mantras).[7]

Teaching fees and sacrificial fee donations were the sources of a Brāhmaṇa's income. To quote Al-Biruni, "He gains his sustenance either by the fee he obtains for teaching Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas not as a payment but as a present or by presents which he receives from some one because he performs for him sacrifices to the fire or by asking a gift for the kings and nobles, there being no importunate pressing on his part and no unwillingness on the part of the givers."[8] He adds that among the universal duties of the Brāhmaṇas are 'work of piety giving alms and receiving them.'[9] Al-Biruni has also stated that the kings visited Tīrthas and gave dānas and alms to Brāhmaṇas.[1] We have many references to land grants mentioning Tīrthas where gifts were offered to the Brāhmaṇas.[2]

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[1] Elliot, I, pp. 27-28.

[2] *Rāj.*, II.132, V.48-52,170.

[3] Elliot, I, p. 11.

[4] *Rāj.*, V.168.

[5] *Samayamātṛkā*, II.77.

[6] *Manu.*, II.152. cf. *Devala* quoted in *Smṛticandrikā*, II, p 396, and *Aparārka*, pp. 450,923. The temple priests, the Mahāpātras and the Gaṅgāputras (Paṇḍās) are regarded inferior even these days. cf. Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 109.

[7] *Ratnāvalī*, Madras, 1935, Act. I, p. 12.

[8] Cf Lakṣmīdhara, *Kṛtyakalpataru*, *Gṛhastha.*, p. 252.

[9] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 131-132.

According to the Dharmaśāstras, receiving gifts from a worthy person was one of the means of his livelihood.[3] Pratigraha (receiving gifts) from a worthy person belonging to the three higher varṇas was considered superior to the acquisition of wealth by officiating as priest or by teaching.[4] It is recommended that a Brāhmaṇa should approach a king or a rich man for his yogakṣema.[5] Yājñyavalkya suggests that he should not again and again resort to that method. Medhātithi remarks that when a person makes a gift through compassion it is not the 'dāna' and pratigrah spoken of by the Śāstra.[6]

The Chachnama informs us that it was considered the bounden duty of the kings to bestow favours on learned men and teachers of morals and Brāhmaṇas, for they were the leaders and guides of the society.[7] The Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣada says that it is only the learned who can properly accept the gift.[8] The Rājataraṅgiṇī mentions at several places that donations were generally made and agrahāras were granted to the Brāhmaṇas by the king.[9] In the records of the various ruling dynasties of this period the kings regarded it as an act of great religious merit to grant land to the Brāhmaṇas. Gifts of land, cow and gold can save even the wicked. The donor of land grant, it has been said, enjoys bliss in the heaven for sixty-thousand years and he who destroys

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1. Ibid. p. 133
2. Ibid, II, p. 147
3. Kane : *HDS*, II, p 110.
4. *Yama quoted in* *Smṛticandrikā*, I, p. 179.
5. Kane : *HDS*, II, pp. 111-112.
6. *Yāj.*, I, 213; *On Manu.*, IV.5.
7. *Chachnama*, p. 44.
8. *Bṛ. Up.*, V.14-56.
9. *Rāj.*, V.16-17,120, VI.89, VII.295-297, V.403,432, VI.89, VII.184, c.

the gift dwells in the hell for the same period.[1] Al-Biruni refers to a section of the Brāhmaṇas, including the Sannyāsis.,[2] who also begged for their maintenance. The Chachnama has also a similar reference.[3] Begging was an established institution in ancient India, closely associated with the Brahmacaryāśrama. Some of the Brāhmaṇas earned their livelihood by practising medicine, astrology and other occult sciences. Sulayman and other Muslim writers inform us that medicine and philosophy were very popular in India. Among the class of the learned people there were philosophers, physicians and astrologers, who formed a community of their own and their profession was hereditary.[4] They were quite influential in society. The houses of astrologers were visited even by the kings, as the Chachnama says.[5] Their advice was sought in matters of marriage settlements, war preparations and birth.[6] They are mentioned in the inscriptions alongwith physicians and with ṭhākur Brāhmaṇas.[7] But it seems that doctors and astrologers were not held in high esteem. Manu says that doctor should never be invited to dinner in celebration of a havya or kavya ritual.[8] The Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa has a low opinion of the Brāhmaṇas of the astrologer class engaged in worshipping planets and those who were born of Śakadvīpī Devalak Brāhmaṇas.[9] Astrology was one of the chief professions of Maga or Śakadīvī Brāhmaṇas, who were considered degraded. They were astrologers, magicians and physicians.[10] From the accounts of early Muslim writers it

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1. *HDS*, II, pp. 858-863.
2. The Sannyāsis are generally mentioned by the Muslim writers. Elliot, I, pp. 6,76.
3. *Chachnama*, p. 169; Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.
4. Nainar, pp. 106,113-114; cf. Elliot, I, pp. 6,20.
5. *Chachnama*, pp. 43-44.
6. Ibid, p. 44; Elliot, p. 308.
7. *IA*, XV, p. 17, XVIII, p. 13, XIX, p. 218.
8. *Manu* as quoted in *Rāṣṭrakūtas and Their Times*, p. 326.
9. *Bṛhaddharma Purāṇa* (*Uttarakhaṇḍa*), ch. 13.51-52, ch. 14.66-67.
10. In *Harṣacarita* (IV) Bāṇa speaks of Bhojaka astrologer, called Tāraka, who predicts on Harṣa's birth and the commentator says that Bhojaka means a 'Maga'.

appears that physicians and astrologers were honoured equally with learned men and their profession was not treated with contempt by the society.[1] Commenting on this Altekar writes, "Its disparagement by Manu and others is probably due to their theory that medicine was the profession of a mixed caste called Ambaṣṭha, a view which does not seem to have been founded on the actual state of affairs in the society. Puritanical notions of purity may also have been partly responsible for the ban placed on the doctors at the Śrāddha dinner."[2]

There was also a small section of the Brāhmaṇas engaged in poetic pursuits. Abu Zayd remarks that "Indians have their poets who live at the courts of their kings and compose verses stuffed with flattery in praise of their kings."[3] During the early medieval period we have a large number of noted scholars and poets who lived at the courts of rulers. The kings patronised them and encouraged them to compose literary works as well as original treatises on various subjects relating to the Dharmaśāstra. They were usually the composers of the family inscriptions, of the dynasties.[4]

Their Non-Brahmanical Occupations

Though sixfold duties were prescribed for the Brāhmaṇas in the normal course, in times of distress or under adverse circumstances they could follow the professions of others. We have many references to show that they were engaged in the occupations of Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas, permitted to them by the Smṛti-writers.[5] According to Al-Biruni, in olden times administrative duties had been performed by them, but since they did not do well "ultimately Brāhmaṇa entrusted them exclusively with the functions of which they now have whilst he entrusted the Kṣatriyas with the duties of ruling and fighting."[1] He is silent on their activities relating to state administration and military functions of his times. They were at that time engaged in such types of professions also. Gautama, Manu and others allowed Brāhmaṇas to take up arms in times of distress, for saving cows and Brāhmaṇas or preventing admixture of varṇas.[2] According to Śukra, a Brāhmaṇa was to be appointed as Senāpati, if a suitable Kṣatriya was not available.[3] We learn from the Chachnama that Brāhmaṇa Chacha was not only well-educated and master of the four Vedas, he was also a skilled-fighter, who also successfully defeated his apponents.[4] In this connection Gardizi informs us that when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna laid siege to the fort of Somanātha, the garrison was assisted by the Brāhmaṇas and the devotees of the idol defended with courage and desperation as fanatics.[5] Utbi also states that the fort of Muñja was the fort of Brāhmaṇas and that they were very stubborn and so hotheaded that they only knew how to create disturbances and they prepared themselves for a grim fight.[6] In Bengal Gobardhana was not only a renowned scholar but also a warrior.[7] The inscriptions of the Candellas, Kalcuris and Cālukya dynasties also mention Brāhmaṇas as military officers.[8] The Rājataraṅgiṇi also refers to Brāhmaṇa soldiers who fought bravely on the battle-field.[9]

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[1] In the 8th century a Brāhmaṇa physician was among donees and recipient of an agrahāra village given by a Pallavaking. *IA*, VIII, pp. 249-250.

[2] Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 326.

[3] Abu Zayd (*Supplement*), p. 87; Nainar, 119; Elliot, I. p. 10.

[4] *EI*, XIV, p. 182. cf. S.K. Mitra : *The Early Rulers of Khajuraho*, p. 173. *EI*, II, p. 354. *EI*, I. p. 31, *EI*, XX, p. 57.

[5] *Manu*, X. 81-82.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp, 161-162.
2. *Gautama*, VII. 6, 25. *Manu.*, 348-349. *Mbh.*, *Śānti Parva*, 78.8 . *Śalya Parva*, 65-42. But *Kautilya* (IX.2) and *Āpastamba* (I.10,29.7; II. 7.17 21) do not support the view.
3. *Śukra*, II 429-30. The *Agni Purāṇa* and *Matsya Purāṇa* recommend that the Senāpati must either be a Brāhmaṇa or a Kṣatriya. *Agni Purāṇa*, ch. 220.1; *Matsya Purāṇa*, ch. 215.10.
4. *Chachnama*, pp 14-15.
5. Gardizi (Tr. Sharma, op. cit.), pp. 84-85; Ibn-ul-Athir, IX 242, cf. Nazim : *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, pp. 117-18.
6. Utbi (Tr. Sharma) : op. cit , p. 62.
7. *Inscriptions of Bengal*, III, pp. 33, 37.
8. *EI*, IV, p. 158. *IA*, XXV, p. 205, ff. *IHQ*, 1928, p. 35. cf. *Duyāśrayakāvya of Hemacandra*, XVI.
9. *Rāj.*, VII.1480, VIII.1013,1071, VIII.472, VII.1017, VII.91, VII. 1171.

The Brāhmaṇas also occupied various administrative posts in the state. Sulayman informs us that there were Brāhmaṇa judges to decide cases.[1] Al-Biruni, while dealing with various aspects of law and justice, does not mention the appointment of judge and their caste. But other evidences show that the Brāhmaṇas were generally appointed as judges in ancient India, presumably because of their learning and acquaintance with the Dharmaśāstra literature. There are many references to the appointment of Brāhmaṇas as ministers,[2] City prefects[3] and daṇḍanāyaka.[4] We are informed by Masudi that the City of Combay was governed by a Brāhmaṇa named Babna on behalf of the Balhara (the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king). He, like his masters, was generous towards the Muslims.[5] We are informed by the Chachnama that Chacha was first appointed in the correspondence department and he disposed off state affairs so efficiently that he rose to be the Chamberlain.[6] The Prime Minister of the Sahi king Dahir of Sindh was also a Brāhmaṇa and was retained even by Kasim.[7] Sometimes, the Brāhmaṇa became rulers, which indicates that they must have taken to the profession of arms. The two kings of Sindh, namely Chacha and Dahar, were Brāhmaṇas.[8] The Sahi rulers of Kabul were also Brāhmaṇas.[9] The last Sahi king was Bhīma, who was succeeded by the Rajaputa ruler Jaipāla.[10] The coins issued by the Sahi rulers were current in the Kabul Valley, Punjab and Northern India.[11] There are many instances of

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[1] Sulayman, p. 35

[2] *Rāj.*, VIII.108, IV.137, IV.469-496, VI.168-194,284. cf. *Kādambarī* pp. 26,114 (Eng. Tr. Bombay, 1890).
The Age of Imperial Kanauj, p. 90.
Inscriptions of Bengal, III, 32, ff. *IHQ*, XVI, p. 571.

[3] *Rāj* , VII.108.

[4] *EI*, II, p. 306.

[5] Masudi, I (Tr. Sprenger), p. 278.

[6] *Chachnama*, pp. 14-15.

[7] Ibid, *Introduction*, p. 7.

[8] Ibid, cf. Elliot, I, pp. 131,182,190-95.

[9] *Cambridgd Histroy of India*, Vol. III , p. 2; cf. *Brigg's Firishta*, I, p. 15; Al-Biruni, II. 15.

[10] *Coins of Medieval India*, p. 56.

[11] Ibid, 55.

Brāhmaṇa rulers in the earlier period. The Śungas, Sātavāhanas, Vākāṭakas and the Kadambas were all Brāhmaṇas.[1] These examples prove that sometimes the Brāhmaṇas performed military as well as administrative duties. In distress the Brāhmaṇas could follow the occupation of Vaiśyas, but there were certain moral restrictions imposed upon them, as Al-Biruni informs us, "Lastly the Brahman lives from what he gathers on earth or from trees. He may try his fortune in the trade of clothes and betel-nuts, but it is preferable that he should not trade himself, and that a Vaisya should do the business for him, because originally trade is forbidden on account of the deceiving and lying which are mixed up with it. Trading is permitted to him only in case of dire necessity, when he has no other means of sustenance. The Brahman is not, like the other castes, bound to pay taxes and to perform services to the kings. Further he is not allowed continually to busy himself with horses and cows, with the care for the cattle, nor with gaining by usury."[2] From this statement of Al-Biruni it appears that the Brāhmaṇas overlooked the advice of Manu and Yājñavalkya that a Brāhmaṇa should live on the collected ears of corn or grain that are left in the field after the crops are gathered, than to accept the gift of unworthy men.[3] Al-Biruni's observation follows to some extent the Gautama Dharmasūtra, which says that a Brāhmaṇa may live upon agriculture,[4] trade, etc., if they appoint agents to carry on the business.[5] Money-lending was not permissible to the

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[1] The Pratihāras of Kanauj were probably of Brāhmaṇa origin. They descended from Bhadrā, the Kṣatriya wife of Hariścandra, the Brāhmaṇa Pratihāra ruler of Mandor. *EI*, XVIII, p. 87 ff., IX, p. 275 ff. Dr. Dasharath Sharma thinks that the cauhānas too were of Brāhmaṇa origin. They call themselves Vatsagotrins and Vipras. (*The Early Chauhan Dynasties*, ch. *I.*)

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 132.

[3] *Manu.* X.112; Yāj, I.128.

[4] Al-Biruni does not mention the agricultural activities of the Brāhmaṇas. Probably in the early medieval period śūdras were more engaged in agriculture than the Vaiśyas. The law-givers suggest that a Brāhmaṇa should avoid the avocation of a Śudra even if the dire necessity arises. Kane: *HDS*, II.133.

[5] *Gautama.*, X. 5-6; Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 123-125.

Brāhmaṇas. The Vasiṣṭha Dharmasūtra says that "a usurer is a greater sinner than even one who is guilty of Brāhmaṇa murder."[1] The writers of the Dharmaśāstras forbid Brāhmaṇas to trade.[2] In support of this Lakṣmīdhara has also mentioned these authorities.[3] Even so, some Brāhmaṇas tried their fortune in the trade of clothes and betel-nut.[4] Al-Biruni also writes that they should not indulge in horse-trading, which is also forbidden by Manu.[5] But the Pehoa inscription of the ninth century mentions that Brāhmaṇa Vāmuka was one of horse-dealers who assembled in Pṛthudaka.[6] We have a number of instances to show that they were serving the states in various capacities, as ministers, tax-collectors and soldiers.[7] The administration of justice was solely in their hands. However, the reasons for these restrictions were to prevent them from indulging in worldly affairs and devote themselves to spiritual life for which they were created.[8]

Some of their Privileges

In addition to their privileges of teaching the Vedas, receiving gifts, marrying women of other castes,[9] they claimed two more privileges relating to exemption from taxation and capital punishment. As regards the first, Al-Biruni remarks, "The Brahmanas are not, like the other castes, bound to pay taxes and perform services to the kings."[10] He further says, "With regard to that which he earns by the crops or from

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1. *Vas. Dh. Sutra*, II.40; cf. *Manu.*, **X**.117; Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 124.
2. *Gautama.*, VII 8-15; *Vas. Dh. Sūtra*, II.24-29; *Āpastamba Dh. Sūtra*, I.7.20.11-13; *Baud. Dh. Sūtra*, II.1.77-78; *Yāj.*, II.40.
3. *Kṛtyakalpataru*, *Gṛhastha*, pp. 199-212.
4. Marcopolo remarks about the Brāhmaṇa merchants of Lar that these Abraiamans are the best merchants in the world and most truthful, "for they would not tell a lie for any thing on earth." (Yule, p. 363.)
5. *Manu.*, **X**.89.
6. *EI*, I, p. 184, 472.
7. *Chachnama*, pp. 14-16, 168-169.
8. Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 124.
9. Al-Biruni. I p. 100; II pp. 133-156.
10. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 132; cf. *Mānsollās*, Pt. I, p.44, v. 166.

the cattle, he is bound first to pay to the ruler of the country the tax which attaches to the soil or the pasture ground. Further he pays him one-sixth of the income in recognition of the protection which he affords to the subjects, their property, and their families. The same obligation rests also on the common people, but they will always lie and cheat in the declarations about their property. Further trading businesses, too, pay a tribute for the same reason. Only the Brāhmaṇas are exempted from all these taxes."[1] Although exemption from taxation has been recommended by most authorities only for Śrotriyas (a Brāhmaṇa learned in the Veda),[2] some have claimed this privilege for all the Brāhmaṇas. The Vasiṣtha Dh.S. says : "A king ruling over his subjects according to the rules of the Śastra should take the sixth part of all wealth except from Brāhmaṇas."[3] The Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra also recommends that 'a king should not recover taxes from Brāhmaṇas.'[4] Though Al-Biruni's statement is supported by the provisions of law-givers, it is doubtful whether the whole community of the Brāhmaṇas enjoyed such exemption. Dr. Altekar[5] and Dr. Ghoshal[6] deny it to the whole class of the Brāhmaṇas, on the ground that neither the Mahābhārata and Nārada nor the 13th century inscriptions of South India exempt Brāhmaṇas from taxes. We may conclude that only the learned Brāhmaṇas were entitled to this privilege.[7] During the early medieval period the donees of the Brahmadeya grants were as a rule learned Brāhmaṇas. A large number of grants were frequently made by the rulers, because of the belief that the king shared in the religious merit accumulated by the Brāhmaṇas.[8] On this subject the Mahābhārata

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1. Ibid, 149, cf. *Kṛtyakalpataru, Rājadharma*, pp. 91-92.
2. *Śatapatha Br.*, XIII, 6.2,18. *Āp. Dh.S.*, II, 10. 26, 10, *Manu.*, VII, 133; *Vas. Dh.S.*, 19,23.
3. *Vas. Dh S.*, I, 42-43,
4. *Viṣhṇu Dh.S.*, III, 26,
5. Altekar : *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Their Times*, pp. 327-328, cf. *State and Government in Ancient India*, p. 195.
6. U.N. Ghoshal : *Hindu Revenue System*, p. 138, Kane : *HDS*, II. 143.
7. Kautilya : *Arthśāstra*. II, 1,
8. Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 143,

says, "A king whose treasury is empty should levy taxes from all Brāhmaṇas except those that are described as Brahmasama and Devasama."[1] Exemption from capital punishment was another privilege enjoyed by the Brāhmaṇas. Manu and others lay down that a Brāhmaṇa cannot be given capital or corporal punishment.[2] This claim is also corroborated by Al-Biruni, "If the murderer is a Brāhmaṇa and the murdered person a member of another caste he is only bound to do expiation (consisting of fasting, prayers and alms-giving)." He adds, "If the murdered person is a Brahmana, the Brahmana murderer has to answer to it in a future life."[3] He is not even allowed to do expiation. Brahmahatyā was regarded as the greatest crime. The Brāhmaṇa was also not to be killed for such crimes as the killing of a cow, the drinking of wine and whoredom The kings could only "confiscate his property and banish him from their country."[4] The Chachnama informs us that the Brāhmaṇas and the monks were not killed.[5] Hsuan Tsang writes that Harṣa exiled those Brāhmaṇas who had conspired to kill him.[6] The Rājataraṅgiṇī says that king Candrapīḍa did not award capital punishment to a Brāhmaṇa murderer because of his caste.[7] Branding and banishment were the heaviest punishments to which a Brāhmaṇa could be sentenced.[8] Manu prescribes heavy fines for a Brāhmaṇa guilty of rape or adultery.[9] Kautilya also forbids corporal punishment for Brāhmaṇas but recommends branding on the forehead, as has been prescribed by Manu.[10] Some authorities prescribe

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1. *Śānti Parva*, 76.2-3.5.9.; cf , *Nītivākyāmṛta*, XXI 14.
2. *Manu.*, VIII. 38; Medhātithi is even against a small fine to be imposed on a guilty Brāhmaṇa (on *Manu* , VIII. 124),
3. Al-Biruni, II, p, 162.
4. Ibid, II, p. 162.
5. *Chachnama*, p. 184, cf. Elliot, I, p. 105.
   According to Mujmalu-t-Tawarikh, the general feeling was that the Brāhmaṇas and the cows should not be killed.
6. Beal, I p. 221.
7. *Rāj.*, IV. 96. cf. ibid, VII. 1229, VIII. 1013, 2060.
8. Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 141.
9. *Manu* , VIII. 378; *Kautilya.*, IV.8;
10. *Manu*, IX. 237

capital punishment for Brāhmaṇa found guilty of destruction, etc.[1] However, according to Al-Biruni for the guilt or theft of costly articles they were blinded and mutilated.[2] Yājñavalkya, Nārada and Śaṅkha prescribe branding and banishment, particularly for theft.[3] Commenting on capital punishment Dr. Altekar rightly remarks, "It may be pointed out that the sentence for the theft of a precious article referred to by Al-Biruni is not to be found in the Smṛti literature. It would, therefore, appear that the Hindu state of our period normally refrained from inflicting the capital punishment on the Brāhmaṇa, probably because the alternative punishment permitted by the Dharmaśāstra or custom was sufficiently deterrent. The life of a Brāhmaṇa blinded and banished or blinded and maimed in the right hand and the left foot was hardly better than a living death".[4]

Their Orthodoxy

Being the 'religious class' and 'devotees of India', the Brāhmaṇas occupied a very high place and enjoyed great respect in Hindu society. They observed a great deal of orthodoxy which distinguished them from other caste-people. Their life was 'pure, simple and virtuous', as mentioned by the Chachnama.[5] They washed themselves thrice a day and were always engaged in religious pursuits. Meat and wine were forbidden to them,[6] says Al-Biruni. Other Muslim writers also point out that, "they do not drink any wine or any of the fermented liquors and eat no meat."[7] Five vegetables were also forbid-

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1. On *Yāj*, II. 283 (Kātyāyana quoted by Viśvarūpa) *Śukra.*, VI. 1151. cf. *Age of the Imperial Kanauj*, p. 369.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.
3. *Yāj.*, II. 270; *Nārada* (Sāhasa), v. 10. On *Yāj.*, II. 270 (*Śaṁkha quoted by the Mita.*).
4. Altekar : *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Their Times*, p. 329.
5. *Chachnama*, p. 183.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 133. The Chinese traveller Hsuan Tsang writes : "The first (order) is that of the Brahmanas or 'pure living.' They keep their principles and live contently, strictly observing ceremonial purity". Watters, I, p. 168.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 133.

den to them, including onions and garlics.[1] They took their meals only twice a day. They did not dine with other caste people and sometimes with their own caste-members, if two were on enmity.[2] They could not take the remains of meals. Water vessels and eating instruments were broken if they were used by others. The eating spot was washed or plastered with clay or cow-dung to purify it again.[3] They were permanently expelled from their caste if they ate food at the home of a Śūdra even for sundry days.[4] To quote Āṅgirasa, if a Brāhmaṇa accepted a Śūdra's food continuously for a month he became a Śūdra for his life-time and was born a dog in his next birth.[5] The Brāhmaṇas had to live between the rivers Sindhu in the north and the Carmaṇvatī in the south. They were not allowed to cross either of these frontiers so as to enter the country of the Turks, or of the Karnāta. Further they had to live between the ocean in the east and west. They were also not allowed to live in the country where Kusha grass was not grown. If they passed beyond these limits, they comitted a sin.[6] Marvazi also states that they were advised not to cross the Gaṅgā, otherwise they would be outcast.[7] As regards matrimonial relationship, Al-Biruni writes that while they were allowed to marry four women including three from lower castes, they never married any women except their own.[8] This statement of Al-Biruni agrees with the observations of other Muslim writers who say that they could marry women of the Kṣatriya class but did not give them theirs. Orthodoxy thus became a part of the life of the Brāhmaṇas. At one place Al-Biruni remarks that the

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1. Ibid, II, p. 135; cf *Manu*., XI. 93-94.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 101; II, p. 134,
3. Ibid, I, p. 102.
4. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 134-135, 163.
5. *Āṅgirasa*, V. 67 (SS., p. 3); cf. *Vyāsa*, IV. 66, 68-69 (SS., p. 370); *Atri*, VIII. 19-20 (SS., p. 42); *Kūrma Purāṇa*. ch. XVIII, 1-2.
6. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 134-135.
7. Marvazi, p. 41 (19); cf. Gardizi, p. 631 (11)
8. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 155-56.

religion of the Hindus is the religion of the Brāhmaṇas.[1] which was by and large correct.

THE KSATRIYAS

Their High Status

According to the Varṇāśrama system, the Kṣatriyas formed the second most important caste. They constituted the ruling class during this period and naturally enjoyed prominence in society. It appears that they were divided into two main classes, one consisted of the ruling section and the other was formed by the common Kṣatriyas (the Kishtariyas). The first held a high position because they exercised sovereignty. Ibn Khurradadhbih, Al-Idrisi, Marvazi and Gardizi speak very highly of them. They are described as "the noblest and all the castes prostrate themselves before them, while they do not do so before any one else. The king belongs to them."[2] They have been generally called 'al-Shakthariya'. At times they enjoyed equal status with the Brāhmaṇas. Gautama says, "It has been declared in the Veda that the Brāhmaṇas united with the Kṣatriyas uphold gods, manes and men."[3] In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa sometime the Kṣatriyas claimed a higher position than the Brāhmaṇas. "Therefore there is nothing higher than the Kṣatra, therefore the Brāhmaṇa sits down below the Kṣatriya in the Rājasūya."[4] Though Al-Biruni does not mention the two classes of the Kṣatriyas, he observes that "their degree is not much below than that of the Brāhmaṇa."[5] These observations of Muslim writers are confirmed by epigraphic sources also. One of the Kalacuri records mentions a Kṣatriya as 'king of twiceborn'.[6] In another inscription a ruling chief has been called a jewel among the

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 39.
2. Marvazi, p. 39; Idrisi, pp. 36-37; Gardizi, p. 627. cf. Elliot, I, pp. 6 and 76; Nainar, pp. 129-130; See. pp. 57-60.
3. *Gaut. Dh.S.* XI, 29.
4. *Śata. Br.* 14.4. 1.23; *Br.Up.*, I, 4, 11.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 101.
6. *EI.* I, p. 41.

Dvijas."[1] According to Sulayman they constituted a class in themselves, for in all the kingdoms the nobility is considered to form but one family."[2] In a similar strain Al-Masudi too observes, "Royalty is limited to the descendants of one family and never goes to another."[3] The association of Kṣatriyas with sovereignty is also confirmed by the Chinese pilgrim Hsu-an Tsang, who writes, "The second order is that of Kṣatriyas, the race of king, this order has held sovereignty for many generations and its aims are benevolence and mercy."[4] Al-Biruni also remarks that the Lord "entrusted the Kṣatriyas with the duties of ruling and fighting."[5] It is clear from the foregoing that the Kṣatriyas formed the ruling class and occupied a very prominent position in society and enjoyed great respect.

Their Royal Duties

As holders of sovereignty it was the duty of the Kṣatriyas to protect the people and to administer the state. About their duties Al-Biruni remarks, "He (Kṣatriya) rules the people and defends them, for he is created for this task."[6] At another place he quotes the Gītā on the duties and character of the Kṣatriya, "The Kṣatriya must fill the hearts with terror, must be brave and high-minded, must have ready speech and a liberal hand, not minding dangers, only intent upon carrying the great tasks of his calling to a happy end."[7] What Al-Biruni attributes to the Kṣatriyas are generally stated in the sacred works of the Hindus. Gautama says that the duty of protection to every one is the foremost duty of the Kṣatriya.[8] According to the Mahābhārata and Manu protection of people and death on the battlefield were considered most respected things.[9] He was considered to "be brave, selfcon-

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1. Ibid, p. 234.
2. Sulayman, p. 32; Elliot, I, p. 6.
3. Elliot, I, p. 20; Nainar, p. 106.
4. Watters, I, 168.
5. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 161-162.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 136.
7. Ibid, I, p. 103; cf. *Gītā*, XVIII. 42-43.
8. *Gaut. Dh.S.*, X, 1. 7.
9. *Śānti.*, 189.5: *Manu* , I, 89; cf. *Udyoga.*, 40. 26.

trolled, efficient in protecting the people and punishing the wicked.'[1] Being a member of the warrior community, he was expected to serve either as a soldier or to rule as a prince and prefer to die on the battlefield rather than in his bed.[2] The Kṣatriyas were usually given the charge of forts for protection.[3] Quoting the older authorities, Lakṣmīdhara says that their special duties are to bear arms and rule the country righteously and protect the Varṇāśramadharma. They had to fight unto the last and never to show their backs from the battlefield.[4] Devala adds that they should worship gods and serve the Brāhmaṇas.[5] It was obligatory for every one except the Brāhmaṇas to pay one-sixth of the income in recognition of the protection which the rulers afforded 'to the subjects, their property and their families'.[6] Manu, Gautama and Bṛhaspati recommend one-sixth as the tax including other rates.[7] The Brāhmaṇas were generally exempted from taxes, as said already.[8]

Their Occupations

In spite of the fact that the Kṣatriyas constituted the fighting and ruling class, not all could be absorbed in the occupation of arms and state administration. None of the Muslim writers mention their other pursuits, but we have epigraphic instances that they also took to agriculture and trade, which were reserved for the Vaiśyas.[9] Manu does prescribe that mem-

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1. *Atri.*, 14 (SS. p. 10); *Parāśara.*, I. 64.
2. *Śukra.*, I. 41, IV. 1136.
3. Many Muslim writers mentioned Thakurs' being the warrior class of the Kṣatriyas. (*Chachnama*, pp 29, 72, 123, 133, 142.); They are called 'Takarirah' (*Futuh-ul-Buldan*, p. 220); Elliot. I, p 121, II, pp 124, 146 etc.
4. *Gṛhastha.*, p. 252.
5 Ibid, p. 253.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 149.
7. *Manu.* VII. 127-132; *Gautam.*, X. 30-33.
8. See pp. 48-51.
9. *EI*, I, p. 154 ff., XIX, p. 58.
The Indore Copper Plate of the Gupta king Skanda Gupta describes Kṣatriya Acalavarman as Vaṇika. In the time of Bhoja we are told that a Kṣatriya's son named Memmaka was engaged in cultivating the field. *EI*, p. 154.

bers of the four castes could earn their livelihood in distress by adopting the occupations of classes lower than their own; otherwise they could be deprived of all their property and banished by the king.[1] Al-Biruni has mentioned that the Kṣatriya reads the Vedas, learns it, but does not teach it.[2] In earlier times they could teach the Vedas even to the Brāhmaṇas, but their position as a teacher was not considered very respectable.[3] Moreover, the nature of their duties was so different that they could not adopt teaching as a regular profession. It is creditable that despite their military preoccupations they found time for literary pursuits. We know that Bhoja Parmāra and Vigraharāja IV, the Cauhāna ruler, were writers of literary works. Bhoja was known as 'Kavirāja'. This tradition of love of learning among rulers can be traced from very early times. We are told in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa and the Upaniṣadas that certain kings were students of Brahmavidyā and even the learned Brāhmaṇas accepted them as their teachers in this regard.[4]

The Non-Ksatriya Rulers

We have many examples of non-Kṣatriya rulers in Indian history. Chacha and Dahir are mentioned as Brāhmaṇa kings of Sind.[5] Al-Biruni writes that the Sahis of Kabul were Brāhmaṇas.[6] Hsuan Tsang refers to non-Kṣatriya kings in certain parts of the country. The Brāhmaṇa kings had been ruling in Kāmarūpa and Ujjainī, Vaiśya kings in Pariyātrā and Kanauj, and Śūdra king in Matipura and Sindha.[7] The kings of the Yaśaskara dynasty in Kashmir were Brāhmaṇas.[8] It is why Medhātithi remarks that kingship can also belong to them who rule and have proper kingly qualities.[1] But in most states, however, Kṣatriyas alone were rulers during our period of study. The Dharmaśāstras generally recommend kingship for the Kṣatriyas, and by and large to discharge duties properly and efficiently. The tradition remained undisturbed.

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[1] *Manu.*, X. 95-96 and *Medhātithi on Manu.*, X, 96.

[2] Al-Biruni, II. 136.

[3] Kane : *HDS* , II, p. 108.

[4] Kane : *HDS*. II, pp. 105-106.

[5] *Chachnama*, pp. 23, 45; Elliot , I, pp. 131, 182, 190-195.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 13.

[7] Watters, II, pp. 186, 250 and 200, 229, 246 and, I, 300, 343 and I, p. 322, and I. p. 252.

[8] *Rāj* , V. 469-475.

Their Privileges

The Kṣatriyas enjoyed some privilege in regard to punishment. Referring to the law of theft, Al-Biruni observes, "If the object is very great, the kings blind a Brāhmaṇa and mutilate him........ Whilst they mutilate a Kṣatriya without blinding him, and kill thieves of the other castes."[2] Even for the most heinous crimes, such as the killing of a cow, the drinking of wine and whoredom a Kṣatriya, like a Brāhmaṇa, was not to be killed. The kings, says Al-Biruni, confiscated his property and banished him from the country.[3] It seems that in actual practice only the ruling families were admitted to these privileges; others were treated according to the laws.

Among other privileges, a Kṣatriya could have three wives.[4] We are informed by Gardizi and Marvazi that the third caste of the Kṣatriya's had matrimonial relations with the Śūdras. They took women from them and also gave their women to them.[5] Such pratiloma marriages, however, are not supported by other evidences of the period. Anuloma marriages did take place and we may presume that the Kṣatriyas took women from castes lower than their own. They were allowed to have woman from other classes except the Brāhmaṇas.[6] Idrisi, however, says that the Kṣatriyas married Brāhmaṇa women while the Brāhmaṇas did not marry into them.[7] The limitation of three wives, as pointed out by Al-Biruni, is not based on any rule. A man could have as many wives as he liked. The polygamous habit of Indian kings is proved by the inscriptions and literary sources of this period. The Cedi king, Gāṅgeyadeva, is said to have obtained salvation at Prayāga with his hundred wives.[1] Pṛthvīrāja III married eight princesses.[2] We learn from the Lahari Stone Inscription that a certain person named Jalasala had as many as nine wives [3] Marcopolo informs us that the king of Mabar had 500 wives and the king of Cail 300 wives.[4] It is thus clear that the rule of three wives for the Kṣatriyas in general and the rulers in particular was not observed; most probably there was no such restriction in regard to marriage.

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[1] On *Manu.*, IV. 84.

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.

[3] Ibid, II, p. 162.

[4] Ibid, II, p. 153.

[5] Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, p. 627.

[6] *Manu*, III. 13; Yāj., I. 56; *Vas.*, I. 24-26; *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 85.

[7] Idrisi, p. 37.

As regards the privilege of drinking, we may note that the Kṣatriyas were allowed to drink moderately while the Brāhmaṇas were not permitted to drink. According to Muslim writers, the Kṣatriyas, the third section of the Indian society, could drink three bowls of wine only, fearing that they might not remain in their senses if they drank more.[5] Al-Biruni says that people in general took drinks before having eaten anything, but then he adds that drinking of wine was forbidden to the three upper classes of the Hindus.[6] Commenting on the statement that the people took drinks, C.V. Vaidya holds that it applied only to the Kṣatriyas.[7] Though the Dharmaśāstra writers do not allow any kind of wine to be taken by the Dvijas,[8] we may presume that the Kṣatriyas were not bound by such restriction as it did not accord with the nature of their activities. Śukra and Lakṣmīdhara have both allowed it to the Kṣatriyas,[9] so has Caṇḍeśvara.[10] It

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1. *EI*, II, p. 4 XII, p. 205.
2. *Rasosara*, pp. 238 and 382.
3. *Rajaputana Museum Report* (1923), pp. 2-3.
4. *Marcopolo*, II, pp. 339, 371 (Tr. Yule).
5. Idrisi, p. 37; Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, p. 627.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 180, II, p. 151.
7. C.V. Vaidya : *HMHI*, p. 400.
8. *Manu.*, XI. 93-94; *Śaṅkha*., 17, 43. *Bṛhatyama*, 2, 3; *Atri.*, 61. All are against drinking especially for the Brāhmaṇas. cf. Sulayman, p. 33; Elliot, I, p. 7.
9. *Śukra.*, I. 116-117; *Niyat*, p. 331.
10. *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 394.

seems that the changing conditions of the society induced the law-givers to allow moderate drinking at least to the Kṣatriyas. The habit of drinking can be proved by epigraphic evidences. The sons of Bhadrā from Brāhmaṇa Pratihāra Hariścandra have been described as wine-drinkers.[1] The inscription of Bhoja Pratihāra testifies that not only the males but even the females of the Pratihāra family were accustomed to drink.[2] We may conclude that while the Brāhmaṇas did not drink wine or liquor, the Kṣatriyas were not prohibited from doing so.

Their Position in Society

The Kṣatriyas were severing their connection with Vedic rituals and adopting more and more Puranic rites. Al-Biruni writes, "He offers to the fire and acts according to the rules of the Purāṇas."[3] "If so," writes Dr. Altekar, "they were rapidly going down to the position of the Vaiśyas and Śūdras, as far as the religious privileges were concerned."[4] As the kings did not generally mention their gotras in the copper-plate grants and adopted the gotras of their Purohitas, it may be inferred that they had an interior status as compared to the Brāhmaṇas. Dr. Altekar thinks that they were getting more and more disassociated from the orthodox Vedic atmosphere.'[5] In this connection it is also argued that the Rajputs, who claimed to be Kṣatriyas, did not originally belong to the Kṣatriya stock.[6] It was permissible and also suggested that the Kṣatriyas should adopt the gotras of their purohitas if they had no gotras of their own.[7] The reason for omitting the gotras seems to be an increasing emphasis being laid on 'Kulas' or 'Vaṁśas' rather than on gotras and pravaras, by the ruling caste. Moreover, the glories of the various families

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1. *EI*, XVIII, p. 95.
2. Ibid, p. 108.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 136
4. Altekar : *op. cit.*, p. 332
5. Ibid.
6. Pratipal Bhatiya : *The Paramāras*, p. 278.
7. *Medhātithi on Manu*, III. 5; Mit. on *Yāj.*, I. 53.

were linked with the founders of the families or the epic heroes to gain prominence. So the Kulas took the place of the gotras in mentioning the castes. In the case of Brāhmaṇas the condition was altogether different. It was necessary for them to mention their gotras and pravaras to distinguish themselves from each other and claim superiority. The purpose of gotras and pravaras, so far as the Kṣatriyas were concerned, lay mainly in religious activities including matrimonial settlements, which could be performed by adopting the gotras of the purohitas.

THE VAISYAS

Their Duties and Occupations

The third group of Hindu society consisted of the Vaiśyas, who belonged to the merchant, agriculturist and cattle-farming classes. They have been mentioned in the accounts of Muslim writers as al-Bayshiya (al-Fasiya), who were artisans and craftsmen and tradesmen.[1] About their duties and privileges Al-Biruni writes, "It is the duty of the Vaiśya to practise agriculture and to cultivate the land, to tend the cattle and to remove the needs of the Brāhmaṇas."[2] He also quotes the Gītā in which these duties have been laid down. "The Vaiśya is to occupy himself with agriculture, with the acquisition of cattle, and with trade."[3] From the accounts of the Muslim writers we get information about their occupations, namely, agriculture, cattle-rearing, trade, craft and the work of artisans. Al-Biruni's account of their duties is very similar to those prescribed in the Dharmśāstras, which recommend that a Vaiśya should earn his livelihood by agriculture, cattle-rearing, trade and money-lending.[4] They have been frequently called in the inscriptions as Vaṇika.[1] Hsuan Tsang also mentions trade as their main profession. He writes, "The third order is that of the Vaiśyas or class of traders, who barter commodities and pursue gain far and near."[2] The inscriptions of this period contain references to the Vaiśyas engaged in trade and purchase of commodities. They had their guilds in the towns. The inscriptions mention guilds of oilmen, gardeners, potters, betel-sellers, stone-cutters and goldsmiths who also engraved the royal orders on the metal.[3] Among these, the goldsmiths had good business because of the love of ornaments by both sexes of the Indian people. The Vaṇikas moved to different places, purchased and sold commodities in the market.[4] As regards the seaborne trade, we are informed by Sulayman that maritime trade was carried through the Bay of Bengal.[5] From Al-Idrisi we learn that vessels from China, Sind and the Persian gulf came to Bharoch, which was an important port on the western coast.[6] Kṣemendra also narrates that a trader Dhana Gupta used to go on trade from Tāmpralipti to the neighbouring lands.[7] It seems that agriculture and cattle-rearing gradually passed into the hands of the Śūdras. We are informed by Muslim writers that the Śūdras were engaged in agriculture and cultivation. They are generally called 'peasants' and 'agriculturists.'[8] Only Al-Biruni associates agriculture and cattle-rearing with the Vaiśyas, which he may be ascribed to his following, the traditional duties of the Vaiśyas prescribed by the Smṛtis. This change in the occupation of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras may be partly due to the influence of Jainism and Buddhism. Those of the Vaiśya community who adopted these two non-Vedic religions had probably given up cultivation altogether because it involved Himsa, which was inconsistent with the principles of non-violence emphasised by these religions. I-tsing, for example, says that "by faultless occupation is meant trading, because it does not injure life. It is customary at present in India to regard traders as more honourable than farmers; this is because agriculture injures the life of many insects. In cultivation silkworms or inslaughtering animals one contracts a great cause of suffering."[1]

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[1] Idrisi, p. 38; Marvazi, p. 39; cf. Elliot, I, p. 16. "The 5th Baisura are artificers and domestics."

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 136.

[3] Ibid, I, p. 103; cf. *Gita*, XVIII. 43.

[4] *Manu.*, IX, 326-333; *Atri.*, 5.6; *Yāj.*; I. 118; *Vasiṣṭha*, II. 23; *Parāśara.*, I.66.

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[1] *EI*, I, p. 174-79, XXI, p. 48; *IA*, XV, p. 162. etc
According to the Chachnama, merchants were living in towns and cities with other caste people. In the City of Alore Kasim was advised not to kill merchants and labourers, because the treasury always remained full owing to their earnings and their labours (*Chachnama*, p. 180).

[2] Watters, I, p. 168.

[3] *EI*, I, pp. 160-165, 175, XIX, p. 57.

[4] *EI*, *XX*, p. 54; **XXI**, p. 48; cf. *ASIAR*. 1936-37, p. 91. XVIII, p. 97.
For the Hattas managed by the guild.

[5] Sulayman (Hindi), pp. 23-27.

[6] Elliot, I, p. 87.

[7] *Bṛhatakathāmañjarī*, *Lambak*, II.

[8] Idrisi, p. 38; Marvazi, p 39; Gardizi, p. 627; cf. Elliot, "4th Śūdra, who are by profession husbandmen" (p. 96.). "Next comes the Sharduya, who are labourers and agriculturists." I, p. 76. Hsuan Tsang also associates Śūdras with cultivation. (Watters, I, p. 168).

Their Position in Society

Al-Biruni writes that the Vaiśyas were created from the thigh of Brāhmaṇa, so they were placed in the third place in the social system. In the time of Al-Biruni there was not much difference between the position of the last two classes of the four varṇas. To quote Al-Biruni again, "Between the latter two classes there is no very great distance. Much, however, as these classes differ from each other, they live together in the same towns and villages, mixed together in the same houses and lodgings."[2] Further, the Vaiśya "is only allowed to gird himself with a single Yajñopavita, which is made of two cords... ." "When a Śūdra or a Vaiśya is proved to have recited the Veda, he is accused by the Brāhmaṇas before the ruler, and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off."[3] Other Muslim writers present, however, a different picture. Firstly, they place Vaiśyas after the Śūdras; secondly, according to one writer, none of the enumerated castes inter-married with them.[4] This would naturally make the Vaiśyas inferior to the Śūdras, which is incorrect. Probably these writers fail-

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1. Takakusu, p. 180.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 101.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 136.
4. Marvazi, p. 39.

ed to understand the complexity of the Hindu social system. As regards Al-Biruni's account of the Vaiśyas, it comes quite near to the views expressed by the earlier lawgivers. According to Baudhāyana, the Vaiśyas and Śūdras were practically of the same status.[1] In the Gītā they are classed with Śūdras as persons suffering from religious disabilities.[2] Dr. Altekar and Ghurye hold that the Vaiśyas were levelled down to the position of the Śūdras.[3] Dr. Altekar agrees with Al-Biruni that there was not much difference between the social status of these two castes.[4]

Dr. Dasharath Sharma does not accept the view that the Vaiśyas had been levelled down to the position of the Śūdras by 1000 A.D. He mentions in support of his view the books on town planning, viz., Samarāṅgaṇa-sūtradhāra and Mānasāra, which give Vaiśyas a distinct place in urban society.[5] Lakṣmīdhara allows the study of the Vedas to the Vaiśyas and lays down that a Vaiśya should not trade in certain articles, such as salt, wine, curds, clarified butter, milk, lac, hides, flesh, indigo, poison, arms and idols (devan).[6] He differs from Manu and Medhātithi because they allowed Vaiśyas to trade in most of these articles.[7] Presumably Lakṣmīdhara allows the lowest order of society, the Śūdras, to trade in the above-mentioned articles. Dr. Sharma further remarks that though after Lakṣmīdhara a number of writers wrote on Hindu Dharma, none has corroborated Al-Biruni's assertion.[8] The important positions filled by the Vaiśyas, put them in a higher category. For instance, they were appointed sometimes as ministers. They also acted as the trustees of the temples,[1] and built and erected the images of gods.[2] All this proves that they had a higher status than the Śūdras.

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[1] *Baudh. Dh.S.*, I. 11. 4; cf. *Tait. Br.*, I, 6. 5. "The Viś go away from (reside separately from) Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas. This shows that they lived separately from these two castes. It is certain the Śūdras lived away from the Dvijas.

[2] *Gītā*, IX, 32.

[3] Altekar : *op. cit.*, pp. 332-33; Ghurye : *Caste and Class in India*, pp. 57, 64, 88, 96.

[4] Altekar, *op, cit.*, p. 333.

[5] Dasharath Sharma : *Rajasthan through the Ages*, p. 437.

[6] *Gṛhastha.*, p. 258

[7] *Manu.*, X. 95.

[8] Sharma : *op. cit.*, p. 438; *Early Cauhan Dynasties*, p. 246.

THE SUDRAS

Their Condition and Occupation

The fourth class of society consisted of the Śūdras, who by tradition were considered low. Al-Biruni puts them in the fourth place of the traditional social system while other Muslim writers place them as fourth among the seven castes of India.[3] Al-Biruni says that they 'were created from the feet of Brahman'. He quotes the Gītā, which says, "The Śūdra is to endeavour to render services and attention to each of the preceding classes, in order to make himself liked by them."[4] He goes on to write that "every man who takes to some occupation which is not allowed to his caste, as, e.g., a Brāhmaṇa to trade, a Śūdra to agriculture, commits a sin or crime, which they consider only a little less than the crime of theft."[5] Undoubtedly Al-Biruni writes about the rules and regulations of the Varṇadharma prescribed for the four varṇas in normal times, in which agriculture cattle-rearing and trade were allowed only to Vaiśyas, and a Śūdra was to devote his time to the service of the upper three Varṇas for his livelihood.[6] Apparently Al-Biruni reproduces the views of ancient authorities and does not take note of the changing condition in which the Śūdras improved their position in the society in regard to occupation. We are informed by other Muslim writers that they were engaged in agriculture and cultivation.[1] Hsuan Tsang observed that they were agriculturists, laboured at cultivating the soil and were industrious at sowing and reaping.[2] Some authorities have allowed the Śūdras to follow the profession of the Vaiśyas. They could earn their livelihood by various crafts if they were unable to maintain themselves by serving the Dvijas.[3] According to Śaṅkha the Śūdras can be proficient in industrial arts.[4] Bṛhaspati allows them to adopt any Śilpa and sell all commodities of their livings.[5] Vṛdha Hārīta recommends them only agriculture.[6] Devala[7] permits a Śūdra to live on agriculture, domestication of animals, carrying loads, selling and buying things, painting, dancing, singing and playing on musical instruments. Medhātithi allows a Śūdra to live without serving the higher varṇas if he was economically sound.[8] This shows that the Śūdras could adopt the avocation of the Vaiśyas. In this connection the account of the Chachnama may be mentioned. It says that when Kasim occupied Sindh in 711 A.D., he being a Muslim gave protection to the people of the City of Alor who were chiefly workmen and good builders. Some of them were merchants and cultivators. They were also given protection and were not heavily taxed.[9] The practice of protection to crafts-men, merchants and agriculturists was also prevalent in Hindu states.

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[1] *EI*, VIII, p 222.

[2] *EI*, XVII, p. 353; I, p. 170-75; *JASB*, XIX, p. 106 etc.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 101; Idrisi, p. 36; Marvazi, p, 39; Gardizi, p. 626.

[4] Al-Biruni, I, p. 103; cf. *Gītā*, XVIII. 46.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 137.

[6] *Manu*, X. 121; Gautama, X. 57; *Parāśara*, 1. 69; *Mit. on Yāj* , I. 120; Lakṣmīdhara specially mentions that in time of distress the lower varṇas. should not take up the occupation of the Upper Varṇas. (*Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, 258.) cf. *Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra*, 7,15-16.

The adoption of agriculture by the Śūdras had become a general profession of theirs and they proved themselves to be 'real-Vaiśyas' of the early medieval period. Agriculture and cattle-rearing became their monopoly, which must have contributed to raise their economic status.[1] They formed themselves into an important section of the society economically. Their improved economic position changed their social status and the reformist movements like Śaivism and Jainism welcome them without any stigma of inferiority. This new change is discernible in the softening attitude of Medhātithi when he allows the Śūdras the right to private property, freedom on waiting on the three higher varṇas and the performance of Saṁskāras, though without Vedic mantras.[2]

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[1] See pp. 7, 12.

[2] Watters, I, p. 168.

[3] *Śānti Parva*, 294.4., on *Yāj.*, I.120; *Nārada (ṛṇadāna)*, 58.

[4] *Śaṅkha*, I.5.

[5] *Bṛhaspati.*, V.530, p. 304 (GOS).

[6] *Hārīta* , 7.189; cf. *Parāśara*, I.86; *Laghu Āśvalāyana*, 22.25.

[7] *Devala quoted in the Mitākṣarā Commentary on Yāj.*, I.120.

[8] On *Manu* , III.156; VIII.415; Dr. U.N. Ghoshal denies these privileges and status of the Śūdras during the period 1000-1300 A.D.—R.C. Majumdar (Ed.) : *Struggle for Empire*, p. 475.

[9] *Chachnama*, p. 180; cf. Elliot, I, pp. 181, 190, 196.

Their Matrimonial Relations

Gardizi and Marvazi say that the Kṣatriyas married Śūdra women and also gave their own in marriage to Śūdras, but the Brāhmaṇas did not enter into matrimonial connections with them.[3] Marvazi further says that even the Śūdras along with the first two castes did not intermarry with them.[4] This relationship shows the occurrence of anuloma and pratiloma types of marriage between the two castes, though savarṇa marriages were generally favoured. We have instances of anuloma marriages which were allowed and occasionally contracted,[5] but pratiloma marriages were condemned and opposed,[6] consequently they were very rare and are not mentioned in literary sources. This is confirmed by Al-Biruni who clearly says that nobody was allowed to marry a woman of a caste superior to his own[7] Hsuan Tsang also observes that the members of a caste married within the caste.[8] Even the Kṣatriyas could not marry the daughters of Brāhmaṇas, as has been noticed by Ibn Khurradadhbih.[9] Then the question of Śūdra marrying the daughter of a Kṣatriya did not arise.

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[1] Sharma, *Early Cauhan Dynasties*, p. 247.

[2] On *Manu.*, III.156, VIII.415.

[3] Gardizi, p. 626; Marvazi. p. 39.

[4] Marvazi, p. 39.

[5] *Baudhāyana Dh.S.*, II.2.3.30; *Gautama*, IV.1; *Vasiṣṭha Dh.S.*, I.24; *Manu.*, III.12-13; *Yāj.*, I.55.57.

[6] *Gautama*, XV. 3.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 155-56.

[8] Watters, I, p. 168.

[9] Elliot, I, p. 16 etc.

Therefore the statement of Gardizī and Marvazi on pratiloma relationship may be taken as an exception. The occurrence of such relationships, howsoever rare, is difficult to explain. It is possible that some of the Śūdras who had adopted the profession of the Kṣatriyas and thereby had gained in social status might have contracted. They came into close contact with the Kṣatriyas, and even matrimonial relationships, with them. We have references to Śūdra rulers and soldiers in literature and inscriptions. Any body could be a king by his prowess, strength and valour[1] and perform the duties of a king.[2] Improvement in their political and economic status might have helped them in entering into matrimonial relations with the Kṣatriyas.[3] It was politically and socially necessary for them that they should associate themselves with the ruling and fighting classes of their times and secure recognition from the higher varṇas.

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[1] *Śukra*, I.81.

[2] *On Manu*., IV.84. The *Purāṇas* forecast that the rulers from the times of the Nandas onwards would be Śūdras (*Viṣṇu Purāṇa,* IV. 24). Hsuan Tsang mentions two Śūdra rulers (Watters, I, p. 322, II, p. 252.).

[3] Cf. Sharma, *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 435. Dr. Sharma suggests that the fighting classes of foreign origin, when assimilated into Hindu society were given place in the Kṣatriya varṇa according to their profession but probably could not be recognised by the higher classes of the Hindus, so they were forced to establish matrimonial relations with the Śūdras because of their low status in Hindu society (p. 435). We have a number of references to the Śūdras serving the state as rulers and soldiers. According to *Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa* the Pālas were of Śūdra extraction (Jayaswal, *Imperial History of India*, p. 72). V.A. Smith holds that some of the Rajaput ruling families were of Śūdra origin (*Early History of India*, pp. 340, 422-31). *The Bijolia inscription* mentions Sajja, who was governor of Chitor, as a pot maker (Śūdra), (*EI*., XXVI, p. 105). cf. Sharma, *Early Chauhana Dynasties*, pp. 57, 248; *Bharatiya Vidya* (English), 1943, p. 221 ff. *The Tippera Grants of Lokanātha* mention him as king. He was probably a Śūdra (*EI*, XV, pp. 301-15). In South India the Śūdras occupied a better status in the state and administration during the early medieval period. cf. Ganguly, *The Eastern Calukyas*, p. 170.

The Place of Sudras in Religion and Society

Despite some improvement in their position they suffered from certain disabilities as mentioned by Al-Biruni. He writes, "The Sudra is like a servant of the Brahmana, taking care of his affairs, and serving him. If though being poor in the extreme he still desires not to be without Yajnopavita, he girds himself only with the linen one. Every action which is considered as the privilege of a Brahmana such as saying prayers, the recitation of the Veda and offering sacrifices to the fire, is forbidden to him to such a degree that when, e.g., a Sudra or a Vaisya is proved to have recited the Veda, he is accused by the Brahmanas before the ruler and the latter will order his tongue to be cut off. However, the meditation on God, works of piety and alms giving are not forbidden to him."[1] Though Al-Biruni's statement is based on older Hindu authorities and it is not certain that it depicts the actual condition, it seems that the Śūdras continued to be subjected to many disabilities. As to Al-Biruni's remark that they were the servants of the Brāhmaṇas, we may quote Manu who says that the service of the Brāhmaṇa alone is declared (to be) an excellent occupation for the Śūdras, for whatever else besides this he may perform will bear him no fruit.[2] While Manu says that Śūdra is a servant of the Brāhmaṇa, all other authorities point out that the special duty of the Śūdras was to render service to the Dvijas.[3] They must prefer Brāhmaṇa and then a Kṣatriya and then Vaiśya to obtain their livelihood, "and serving a Brāhmaṇa conferred greater happiness or benefit on the Śūdra than serving a Kṣatriya conferred greater good than serving a Vaiśya."[4]

The Śūdras were unfit for the Saṁskāra of Upanayana, and if they so desired, they could gird themselves with a linen one. In the Dharmaśāstras, there are some Saṁskāra which are prescribed to the Śūdras and may be performed by them but without Vedic mantras.[1] There is no mention of the Upanayana for them and the Veda speaks of it only for the three upper classes, because, "The Creator created the Brāhmaṇa with Gāyatrī (metre), the Rājanya with Triṣṭubh, the Vaiśya with Jagatī, but he did not create the Śūdra with any metre, therefore the Śūdra is known to be unfit for the Saṁskāra (of Upanayana)."[2] It is then clear that the Śūdras could not gird themselves with Yajñopavīta. Al-Biruni's statement is, therefore, either not correct or may be that in his time they could gird themselves with Yajñopavīta (of linen). It is likely that they did it, they could do it, as many things were done, though not strictly prescribed by the Dharmaśāstras. Al-Biruni's information regarding the prohibition of Vedic studies for the Śūdras is supported by the Dharmśāstras, which generally prescribe them only for the three upper classes,[3] as they were entitled to the Upanayana Saṁskāra and the study of the Veda followed it. As regards the study of the Veda, Gautama goes to the length of recommending that, "if the Śūdra intentionally listens for committing to memory the Veda then his ears should be filled with (molten) lead and lac; if he utters the Veda then his tongue may be cut off; if he has mastered the Veda his body should be hacked."[4] Not only could a Śūdra not study the Veda but Vedic study was not to be carried on in his presence.[5] The Śūdras were not permitted to study the Veda, because they were considered unfit for the Upanayana Saṁskāra, without which they could not be initiated into Vedic studies.

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[1] Al Biruni, II, p. 136.

[2] *Manu.*, X.123; Vide X.121-122.

[3] *Ap. Dh.S.*, I.1.1.7-8; *Gautama*, X.57-59; *Vas. Dh.S.*, II.20; *Manu.*, X.121-123; *Yāj.*, I.120; *Baudh. Dh.S.*, I.10.5.

[4] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 120.

In legal matters also the Śūdras were discriminated against. They were subjected to a heavy penalty for an offence for which a Brāhmaṇa went unpunished. According to the law-

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1. *Vedavyāsa*, I.17; *Haradatta on Gautama*, X.51; *Manu.*, II.32, IV. 80; cf. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 159.
2. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 154.
3. *Jaimini* , VI.1.33. cf. *Vas Dh.S.*, IV.3; *Manu.*, II.16; *Aparāraka*, p. 23.
4. *Gautama* , 12.4; cf. *Atrisaṁhitā*, 19.136; *Mṛchakatika*, 9.21.
5. *Vas.*, 18.13; *Gautama.*, XVI.18-19; *Ap.Dh.S.*, I.3.9.9; *Yāj.*, I.184; *Adiparva*, 68.20.

givers, a Śūdra was liable to heavier punishment than others for certain offences. If he could be awarded capital punishment for certain offences, a Brāhmaṇa could at the most be banished. In case a Śūdra was murdered, the punishment awarded was to be one-sixteenth of a Brāhmaṇa's murder.[1] Al-Biruni's treatment of the subject is on the lines of the Dharmaśāstra. However, he does not specifically mention Vaiśyas and Śūdras while dealing with the law of punishment.[2] But if for reciting the Vedas their tongues could be cut off; other punishments could also be awarded according to the Smṛti law. We have no sufficient information about the actual nature of punishments.

According to Al-Biruni they had no right to study the Vedas and perform sacrifices which were mainly the privileges of the Brāhmaṇas.[3] Nor could they perform 'homa' and practice 'japa' and 'tapa' otherwise he was liable to suffer punishment.[4] They were entitled to perform Pañcamahāyajñas[5] without Vedic mantras and Putradharma, i.e., the building of wells, tanks, temples, parks and distribution of food and work of charity and gift[6] on such occasions specially mentioned for this purpose. Medhātithi allows Śūdras to perform all the rites prescribed for the higher varṇas, but they are to be performed without Vedic mantras.[7] They were to think of the Devatā and utter loudly the word 'namah', which was to be the only mantra in their case.[8] Al-Biruni also informs us that though eating meat and drinking wine were not forbidden to the Śūdras, yet they could not dare to deal in these commodities.[1] Caṇḍeśvara in the Gṛhastharatnākara quotes Kālikā Purāṇa which does not allow the Śūdras to deal in honey, skins, lac, wines and flesh.[2] Bṛhata Parāśara also forbids them to sell wines and flesh.[3] It appears that they were not allowed to sell wines and meat in the early medieval period.

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[1] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 152, 160.

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 62, 136-137.

[3] Ibid, II, p. 136.

[4] *Atri.*, 19 (*SS*, p. 9); *Skandapurāṇa*, ch. 242, v. 41. Al-Biruni mentions the story of Rāma who killed Sambuka who was performing 'Japa', which was not allowed for the Cāṇḍālas (Al-Biruni, II, p. 137; cf. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII.73.76 and *Uttar Rāmacarita*, II. v. 8).

[5] *Laghu Viṣṇu*, V. 9 (*SS*, p. 122) ; *Vyāsa*, I.6 (*SS*, p. 351), *Śukra.*, IV.369.

[6] Kane, *HDS*, II, 157 f.n. 370.

[7] *On Manu.*, III. 67, 121, 156, X.127; cf. *Viśvarūpa* on *Yāj.*, I.131.

[8] *Gautama.*, X.66-67; cf. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 158, f n. 371.

At another place Al-Biruni writes, "If a Brahmana eats in a house of Sudra for sundry days, he is expelled from his caste and can never regain it."[4] Al-Biruni's statement is confirmed by most of the authorities.[5] However, Lakṣmīdhara allows a Śūdra to offer rice to a Brāhmaṇa to be cooked at the latter's house.[6] It may be reasonably mentioned that during the early medieval period intercaste dining, specially with the Śūdras, had become most unusual and rules about taking food from the Śūdras had become rigid and strict.

A Better Position

Al-Biruni's information regarding the position, status and occupation of the Śūdras are mainly based on the Dharmaśāstra provisions and do not present the actual condition of the time. Though the disabilities suffered by the Śūdras in general during the long history of India are noted by Al-Biruni, their position in the early medieval period seems to have improved. Other Muslim writers do not mention them as

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
2. *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 479.
3. *Parāśara*, p. 101. Lakṣmīdhara quotes *Vyāsa* and recommends that a Śūdra can sell meat and need not perform Saṁskāra like Upanayana and Agnihotra rites. *Kṛtyakalpataru, Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, pp. 271-72.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p, 163.
5. Undoubtedly the authorities were against taking food from the Śūdras in normal times. According to them the Brāhmaṇas should not take food from Śūdras (*Gautama*, XVII.6; *Manu.*, II.235; *Yāj.*, I.166; *Parāśara*, IX.19). *Manu* does not permit the food of a Śūdra to a Brāhmaṇa and holds that a learned Brāhmaṇa should not take cooked food from a Śūdra. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva prescribes a 'Krichchhara' penance for Brāhmaṇa for taking food cooked by a Śūdra. cf. B.P. Majumdar, *Socio-Economic History*, p. 107.
6. *Niyatakālakāṇḍa*, p. 356; cf. *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 326; *Niyatakāṇḍa*, pp. 262-263.

untouchables, some of whom had raised their status and, according to Al–Biruni, they were treated as the Vaiśyas and there was no great distance between the two.[1] In the later Smṛtis pious Śūdras are distinguished from others of their class and they have the privilege of performing Śrāddha.[2] Lakṣmīdhara quotes Hārīta and holds that pure-minded Śūdras are better than bad and notorious Dvijas.[3]

THE UNTOUCHABLES
THE ANTYAJAS

The last in the social order, even below the Śūdras, and altogether outside the classical scheme of caste, stood the Antyajas who are mentioned by Muslim writers. From the most ancient times they were divided into many classes and were compelled to live outside the towns and villages and walked in the streets so carefully as not only to touch the other Hindus but even not to cast their shadows upon them. They performed functions either too dirty by nature or were involved in acts of cruelty. Early Muslim writers other than Al-Biruni mention them by the names of Cāṇḍāla (Sandaliya) and Ḍomba (Dunbiya).[4] Al–Biruni's list is longer. According to him the Śūdras are followed by the Antyaja, who rendered various kinds of services, and "are not reckoned among any caste, but only as members of a certain craft or profession. There are eight classes of them who freely intermarry with each other, except the fuller, shoemaker and weaver, for no others would condescend to have anything to do with them. These eight guilds are the fuller, shoemaker, juggler, the basket and shield maker, the sailor, fisherman, the hunter of wild animals and of birds, and the weaver The four castes do not live with them in one and the same place. These guilds live near the villages and towns of the four castes, but outside them.[1]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p 101.

[2] *Laghu Viṣṇu*, V.105.

[3] *Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, p. 427. Cf. Somadeva observes that internal and external purity qualifies even a Śūdra for spiritual duties connected with gods, Brāhmaṇas and ascetic life. (*Nītivākyāmṛta*, VIII.12).

[4] Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, pp. 627-628; Khurradadhbih mentions Lahud, and Idrisi writes Zakya (Elliot., I, pp. 16, 76) in place of Dunbiya (Ḍomba). See pp. 7-8; Idrisi, p. 37-38.

Al-Biruni in his accounts also refers to the people called Hadi Ḍoma (Ḍomba), Cāṇḍāla and Badhatau (sic), who were not reckoned among any class or guild. They did dirty work, such as the cleansing of the villages and performed other services. They were considered, according to him, the only class distinguished by their occupation. According to general opinion, he goes on to say, they descended from a Śūdra father and Brāhmaṇa mother as the children of fornication and they were degraded out-castes.[2]

About the Cāṇḍālas, Marvazi says that none of the castes (of four varṇas) touched them. The Ḍombas, he writes, were also treated as Cāṇḍālas but the latter did not mix or intermarry with them.[3] We may refer here to the earlier observations of Hsuan Tsang which confirm Al-Biruni's remark on the position of the untouchables, "Butchers, fishermen, public performers, excutioners and scavengers have their habitations marked by a distinguishing sign. They are forced to live outside the city and they sneak along on the left when going about in the hamlets."[4] Their position was below even those who were considered "mixed castes", i.e., outside the four order of hereditary class distinctions.[5] Thus it is clear that the outcastes were not allowed to reside in the towns and cities and they lived at a distance from the places inhabited by the general population. As they had adopted mean professions, they were forbidden to reside with or near other classes.

Several points emerge from the above account. Firstly,

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 101.
2. Ibid.
3. Marvazi, p. 39. About the Ḍomba, Gardizi writes that, "they are altogether like the Chandalas. The latter mix with them and take women from them but do not give them theirs." (pp. 627-28).
4. Watters, I, p. 147.
5. Ibid, I, p. 168.

we are told that the untouchables were called Antyajas. This word is applied to all the lowest castes like Cāṇḍālas.[1] Secondly, we learn that they were not rackoned among any caste. In this regard the theory of the early Smṛtis was that there were only four varṇas, and there was no fifth varṇa. Manu says, "The Brāhmaṇa, the Kṣatriya, and the Vaiśya castes (varṇa) are the twice-born ones, but the fourth, the Śūdra has one birth only, there is no fifth (caste)."[2] Thirdly, we see that the second group of the untouchables were considered illegitimate and outside the pale of the caste order. This group consisted of the Cāṇḍālas. According to the provisions of the Dharmśāstras, the Cāṇḍālas were regarded as untouchables by birth. The word 'Cāṇḍāla' is used in a technical sense. He was the offspring of a Śūdra father and a Brāhmaṇa mother.[3] He is the lowest among men, beyond the pale of religious observances prescribed for the four varṇas and often spoken of in the same breath with dogs and crows.[4] Al-Biruni's list of untouchables has many points in common with those given in the Smṛtis.

The Two Groups of Untouchables

Let us now consider the division of Antyajas into two groups. We have seen that Al-Biruni has separated the four untouchables of the second group from the eight of the first group. Other writers mention only two classes of the Antyajas, viz., cāṇḍālas and Ḍombas. C.V. Vaidya, however, puts the whole of the first group of eight Antyajas in the class of Lahud (others Ḍomba) of Ibn Khurradadhbih.[5] But on account of the nature of the profession of Lahud, the first group of eight Antyajas cannot be put together. They have been put by

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[1] *Manu.*, IV.61; *Yāj.*, I.273; *Viṣṇu Dh.S.*, 36.7; *Bṛhadyama* (Quoted in *Mit.* on *Yāj.*, III. 260); *Manu* has also used the word in the sense of Śūdra, VIII.279.

[2] *Manu.*, X. 4.

[3] *Gaut* , II,15-16; *Vas. Dh.S.*, 18.1; *Baudh. Dh.S.*, I.9.7; *Manu.*, X.12; *Yāj.*, I. 93.

[4] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 81.

[5] C.V. Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 393.

Al-Biruni in the second group, because of their professional characteristics. Marvazi and Gardizi distinguish them from each other on grounds that they had no matrimonial connections and followed different occupations. Then why does Al-Biruni separate them into two groups ? According to Dr. Altekar the reason was that the Antyajas of the second group had no guild organisations of their own like those of the first group, and therefore the second group of Antyajas were not reckoned among any such castes or guilds.[1] But this type of classification is unknown to the Smṛti literature and Dr. Altekar's explanation does not seem convincing. No doubt some castes of the first group had their guild organisations, but the professions like those of hunters, basket and shield makers and jugglers had no such organisations. Therefore the likelihood is that the separation was made not on the basis of guild organisations but differences of their profession, cultural and social status. According to Al-Biruni the first group was more near to the main four castes than the second group which, however, had a lower status than the first. However, the occupations pursued by both the groups were held in contempt. From very early times they have been treated as untouchables because of the dirty nature of their professions.[2] The twelve classes of the untouchables of the two groups may be equated with the Antyajas of Smṛti writers. They were supposed to have sprung from pratiloma unions of various natures. It may be remarked, however, that the Antyajas had also evolved like other castes in the caste hierarchy. Their first group was more privileged as compared with the second group which was more depressed and was looked down upon.

Their Professions

We may conclude from the foregoing that they had adopted many kinds of professions. The first group of Antyajas performed such jobs as washing, shoemaking, acting, basket and shield making, boating, fishing, hunting and weaving. Al-Masudi says that in the army of Rahma (Pāla king) Dharma (Dharmapāla) a very large number of fullers and washermen were employed to wash military garments. The number has been mentioned between ten and fifteen thousand.[1] It may be noted that the weavers were looked upon as untouchables, but in the Smṛti literature they have not been included among the untouchables. Although in the Smṛtis the food of the weaver (Tantuvāya) is prohibited,[2] but nowhere has such a low position been ascribed to them. Most probably their occupation was responsible for their degradation in society. According to the later Smṛtis namely, Bṛhadyama[3] and Āpastamba[4] it was considered sinful to touch a person dealing in red and blue clothes and wear blue cloth or colour. "It would seem," writes Dr. Altekar, "notions like these were responsible for the theory that persons, who produce or deal in red or blue cloth, were impure."[5] If we accept this explanation, only a section of the weavers who dealt in red and blue clothes should have been untouchables. But Al-Biruni lists the whole community of weavers as Antyajas. If Al-Biruni's information is correct, the famous Indian industry of weaving was, as Dr. Altekar remarks, in the hands of untouchables.[6] Even in modern times some orthodox people do not wear clothes, new or washed one by washermen without washing them again by themselves. Probably this notion was responsible for treating the weavers as untouchables like washermen, as mentioned by Al-Biruni.[7] According to Masudi, in the kingdom of Rahma (the Pālas of Bengal) the weavers manufactured "a very fine and delicate

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[1] Altekar, *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, p. 323.

[2] *Ap Dh.S* , II.1-2; *Gautama*, XIV.30.

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1. Masudi, I, pp. 384-85; Elliot., I, p. 25.
2. He is regarded as a Śūdra by the *Mahābhāṣya* (II.4.10) and as excluded from sacrificial rites, then the question of taking food does not arise.
3. *Bṛhadyama*, III.52.
4. *Āpastamba* , ch. IV.
5. Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 321 ff.
6. Ibid, p. 321.
7. Al-Biruni.

variety of cloth," which was not found in any other country.[1] According to Sulayman, this cloth was made of cotton and it was so fine and beautiful that a whole piece of cloth could be passed through a ring. Sulayman himself had seen it.[2] The reference is to the famous 'muslin' of Bengal.[3] The accounts of Sulayman and Al-Masudi clearly indicate that the weaving industry was run by the weavers, whom Al-Biruni classifies among untouchables.

The Antyajas of the second group were occupied with dirty work like the cleansing of the villages and rendering similar other services. Among them the Cāṇḍālas and the Ḍombas also played on musical instruments. Such occupations are like those of the Sandaliya (Cāṇḍālas) and Dhunbiya (Ḍombas) who, as other Muslim writers inform us, were musicians and people of amusements and games and players of various (musical) stringed instruments and dances.[4] About the Hadi, Ḍomba, Cāṇḍāla and Badhatau Al-Biruni writes, "Of the classes beneath the castes, the Hadi are the best spoken of, because they keep themselves free from everything unclean. Next follows the Doma, who plays on the lute and sings. The still lower classes practise as a trade killing and the inflicting of judicial punishments. The worst of all are the Badhatau, who not only devour the flesh of dead animals, but even of dogs and other beasts."[5]

The professions of the Cāṇḍālas and Ḍombas were similar in nature. Al-Biruni also writes that the Ḍombas played on lute and sang. The Rājataraṅgiṇī confirms that there were professional singers.[6] Hadis were very different from Ḍomba and were probably agricultural labourers or talakhetaka.[7] The distinct occupations of the Cāṇḍālas and Ḍombas put them on the level of Svapākas whose profession included inflicting corporal punishment on criminals or killing as a trade. According to the Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra, the avocation of the Cāṇḍālas was to hang men or kill those who were offenders and condemned to death.[1] Manu also assigns them to act as hang-men when the king so orders.[2] According to the Agni Pūrāṇa, they are prescribed the job of execution of criminals.[3] Medhātithi also recommends a similar job to the Svapākas.[4] Parāśara puts Svapāka, Ḍomba and Cāṇḍāla in the same category.[5] Although they acted as hangmen, it is not the whole community which did the job of executioners. The normal occupation of the Cāṇḍālas was the cleansing of villages and to remove the dirt of villages in the first part of the day, as Uśanas recommends.[6] The avocation of these outcaste people is still followed by this class in some parts of India.

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[1] Masudi, I, pp. 384-385.

[2] Sulayman, p. 17; *Akhabar*, p. 13.

[3] Sauvaget : *Akhbar*, p. 53.

[4] Idrisi, p. 38; Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, pp. 627-628; cf. Elliot., I, pp. 16, 76.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

[6] *Rāj.*, V. 354-396.

[7] Sharma, *The Early Chauhana Dynasties*, pp. 251-52.

Their Position in Society

From the foregoing discussion it appears that their relations with caste people depended on the nature of their occupations. The first group of Antyajas, as mentioned by Al-Biruni, enjoyed a better status than those comprising the second group. The former was not included in any caste, it lived outside the village but near the dwellings of the main four varṇas; while Dr. Altekor remarks that "all the Antyajas were not on the same level in our age; the juggler, basketmaker, sailor, fishermen and hunter seem to have constituted in our period a class of semi-untouchables."[7] Their sub-division and the restricted matrimonial connections rendered to make their untouchability nominal.[8]

As regards the social position of the Cāṇḍālas in general,

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1. *Viṣṇu* Dh.S., 16.11.
2. *Manu* , X.56.
3. *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch. 151.10 f.
4. *Medhātithi on Manu*, X.38.
5. *Parāśara quoted by Aparārka*, p. 1197.
6. *Uśanas*, 9-10.
7. Altekar, *op. cit.*, 323.
8. Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 393.

it was one of sheer degradation. They lived outside the towns and villages. As mentioned by Hsuan Tsang, their habitations were marked by distinguished signs 'and they sneak along on the left when going about in the hamlets.'[1] To quote Gardizi, "These Cāṇḍālas go about with piece (of wood) in their hands, at the end of that piece of wood there is a ring and within it small rings are fitted, and with this piece of wood they give warning that men on seeing that sign and on hearing the sound of the rings should get out of their way and no harm befall on them.'[2] This kind of treatment to which the Cāṇḍālas were subjected was not new. We are informed by Fahien that the Cāṇḍālas had to give notice of their approach by striking a piece of wood.[3] It is also confirmed by It-sing who says they were forced to strike a wooden clapper on entering a town to warn the upper class people of their polluting approach, and any one touching them by mistake washed himself and his garments.[4] We have a literary reference in Bāṇa, who, in his Kādambarī, mentions a Mātaṅga Kanyā as striking the pavement of Śūdraka's court with a split piece of wood.[5] Manu recommends that the houses of Cāṇḍālas should be outside a village. In his opinion, their chief wealth is their asses and dogs, their clothes should be the garments of the corpses, and they should not enter in a town or village at night.[6] Uśanas also says that they should have a cymbal under their armpits.[7] These provisions were obviously made only to avoid their touch by the 'savarṇa' people. Later Smṛti writers too declare all groups of Antyajas as untouchables.[8] It was laid down that the con-

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1. Watters, I, p. 147.
2. Gardizi, pp. 627-628.
3. Gibs, *Travels*, p. 21.
4. *Record*, p. 139.
5. *Kādambarī*, p. 68 (Jibanadas Ed.); cf. *Śukra.*, I.44; According to Hemacandra, they were required to strike the ground with a bamboo stick to apprise people of their approach. *Deśīnāmamālā*, II.73; III.54.
6. *Manu.*, X. 51-56.
7. *Uśanas*, 9-10.
8. *Aṅgiras.*, 17.20; *Atri.*, 17.4; *Āpastamba.*, Ch. IV, V.

tact of the Cāṇḍālas with the Brāhmaṇas would pollute the latter. Different kinds of prāyaścittas were prescribed for each of the four varṇas if they drank water from the pot of a Cāṇḍāla.[1] In the case of touch one had to take bath to purify oneself.[2] Not only did the touch but even a look at a Cāṇḍāla demand 'Ācamana' from the Dvija for purification.[3] The Kuvalayamālā has bracketed Cāṇḍālas and Ḍombas with the Mlecchas, remarking that they have no dharma, artha or kāma as their objective.[4] Kalhaṇa also observes that the Cāṇḍālas were universally hated.[5]

To conclude, from the time of Manu to the end of the early medieval period, there was no change in the rules regarding to Cāṇḍālas. They were put under a most rigorous ban of untouchability. Differant penances were prescribed for purification if people happened to come in contact with them, conversed with them, or crossed their shadows. In our society they were treated as a degraded lot forced to live outside the villages. They were not allowed to come in contact with the higher castes. Their miserable condition has been correctly pointed out by the Muslim writers. Their accounts throw a lucid light on our social system. For the services that they rendered they received from the society a most callous and inhuman treatment.

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[1] *Aṅgiras.*, 4-5; *Vṛhadyama*, I.9.

[2] *Atri.*, 239; *Parāśara.*, 6.24.

[3] *Aṅgiras.*, 17.

[4] *Kuvalayamālā*, p. 40, line 29.

[5] *Rāj.*, V.27, VI.79.192.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE LAWS AND CUSTOMS

Changing Nature of Marriage

Though the rules concerning marriage, as laid down in the older Smṛtis, were not basically changed during this period and the commentaries and digests preserved them, they preferred lowering down the marriageable age of girls. While anuloma marriages took place, pratiloma marriages had gone out of practice before this period. Owing to the imposition of caste restrictions, the anuloma marriages too were gradually losing ground. Widow remarriage and divorce had almost stopped and the satī custom was generally favoured. In the royal houses and in the richer sections of society some married more than one woman and polygamy was prevalent.

Importance of Marriage

Marriage being the most important of all the saṁskāras and one of the sacred institutions of the Hindus, it has rightly been regarded as a very important event in one's life. Married life has been highly praised in ancient Hindu scriptures. A man's life was considered incomplete and unholy without a wife.[1] According to Manu an un-married man is unfit to perform religious rites; the woman is visibly the cause in production of children, the nurture of those born, and the daily life of men; heavenly bliss for the ancestors and oneself, offspring and religious rites depend on one's wife alone.[2] In this connection Al-Biruni writes that 'no nation can exist without a regular married life.'[3] According to the epics marriage was a normal, natural and usual custom in every civilized society, leaving aside a lawless and unorganised society.[4] Al-Biruni regards this institution as a biological necessity for maintaining sexual relationship in a civilized society.[1] Indeed marriage was regarded as a social and biological necessity, it had been given a religious sanctity since the Vedic age. The epics attach the greatest importance to marriage as a prelude to a happy life.[2] In ancient India marriage has been treated as a sacrament and not a mere relationship between the two parties. It was regarded as an 'indissoluble bond uniting two souls' so harmoniously that no one could think of one's existence without the other.[3] Thus the foundation of marriage is not only a social necessity, but it has also some religious importance. Indirectly Al-Biruni admits this fact when he writes that "every nation has particular customs of marriage and especially those who claim to have a religious law of divine origin."[4] There is no doubt that the marriage laws of ancient India were governed by religious codes, which could not be broken very easily in normal course. In this way the chief purposes of marriage according to the smṛtis and Nibandhas are "Dharma-Sampatti, Prajā and Rati."[5] For their achievement the Gṛhyasūtras lay much emphasis on married life and stress the importance of the Gṛhasthāśrama, which is the centre of other three āśramas.[6] Al-Biruni also testifies to this fact when he says that a Brāhmaṇa youth was allowed by his teacher to marry a girl and after marrying he established a family.[7] Al-Biruni obviously refers to the second stage of life, i.e., the Gṛhasthāśrama, which begins with marriage. Thus basically a religious institution, this institution found a very important place in Hindu life. It was attached with the

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[1] *Śat. Br.*, V. 2; 1-10; *Tait. Br.*, II.2.2.6. cf. *Ait. Br.*, III.27.5; *Pan. Br.*, VIII.10.1; *Ait. Ar.*, I.2.4.

[2] *Manu.*, IX.27-28; cf. Yāj., I.78.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.

[4] *Mahābhārata*, XII.68.22. *Rām*, II. 67.11.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.
2. *Mahābhārata*, XII.12.12; *Rāma* , II.106.22.
3. *Pār. Gṛ. S* , I.4.14; cf. *RV*, X.85.47.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.
5. *Manu.*, IX.28; Yāj.. I.78; *Āp. Dh.S.*, II.6.13.16-17.; cf. Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 428-429.
6. *Go. Gṛ* , III.4.1-2; *Jaimini*, VI.1.17. ff.; *Baudh. Dh.S.*, II.6.11.29-30; cf. *Manu.*, III.77-79.
7. Al-Biruni, II. p. 131.

Gṛhasthāśrama, 'the best of all the Āśramas and the weightiest of all.'[1]

Forms of Marriage

Muslim writers do not mention the forms of marriages. According to the Smṛtis and digests there were the traditional eight forms in order of merit.[2] Brāhma, Daiva, Ārṣa and Prājāpatya were regarded as commendable for the people of all castes, Gāndharva and Rākṣasa were good for Kṣatriyas alone, Āsura and Paiśāca were unanimously condemned.[3] The ceremony to which Al-Biruni and the Chachnama[4] refer, seems to correspond with the rules and regulations of the Brāhma form of marriage. On that occasion the Brāhmaṇas performed the rites of the sacrifices and they as well as others received alms and gifts. According to this form the young girl decorated with ornaments offered by her father was given to a man of equal caste of pure conduct and learning.[5] However, the Brāhma form was common and popular among all the forms of marriage. As no other types of marriage have been mentioned by Muslim writers, it seems that the popular form of marriage was the Brāhma form.

Though the Brāhma form was in vogue among the Kṣatriyas, the Gāndharva form, union between two lovers with their mutual consent but without their parents' interference, still continued.[6] They also practised the Rākṣasa form, in which the boy seized the bride forcibly. Sometimes the bride was a willing party to abduction.[7] On rare occasions

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1. *Mbh.*, XII.12.6.11.12; XII.12.12. Cf. *Rāma*, II.106.22.
2. *Manu.*, III.21.34; *Yāj.*, I.58-61; *Śaṁkha.*, III.124-126.
3. *Śaṁkha* , IV, v. 3. (*SS*, p. 376)
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154; *Chachnama*, p. 46 f.n , p. 47.
5. *Manu* , III.27.; cf. *Chachnama's* description of royal marriage, pp. 46 ff.
6. Cf. *KSS.*, III.60-67; X.146; VI.13-14; LXXV.131; LXXXVI.131; VII.82. Confirm instances of Gāndharva marriages.
7. In this connection the marriages of Caulukya princess Bhavanāga with the Rāṣṭrakāta prince Indra (*EI*, XVIII, p. 235 ff.) and the Gāhaḍavāla princess Sanyogita with the Cahamana king Prithvirāja III (*Raso* : *Jangam Kathā*, LX, *Rāsosāra*, p. 241) can be mentioned. Cf Tod, *Rajasthan*, II, p. 834 ff.

did the Svayaṁvara type of marriage also take place, in which the bride was free to choose her husband from amongst those suitors who were voluntarily invited to take part in an open assembly. No doubt this system of Svayaṁvara was restricted to the ruling families. We have very few references of this type of marriages.[1] Probably they were going out of fashion.

Marriage the Parents' Concern

Al-Biruni mentions that the birth of a girl was unpopular among the Hindus,[2] and that the marriages were arranged by the parents.[3] In the absence of parents the responsibility fell on the elder brothers or other members of the family.[4] We are informed by Chachnama that Chacha's dughter Bai was a grown-up girl and when Daharsiah, her elder brother, came to know that his sister had reached the age of maturity he became anxious to see her married.[5] In the Harṣacarita it is recorded that Prabhākaravardhana becomes anxious for the marriage of his daughter Rājyaśrī, who had reached the marriageable age.[6] Failure to perform this duty was considered a disgrace and amounted to a great sin (Mahāpātaka) of Brahmahatyā.[7] We shall discuss this point while dealing with the age of the marriage of girls.

Permission for Marriage

Before one was married, it was customary in ancient India that he should take permission of his teacher. There was no need for girls to obtain permission because marriage was necessary for them. As regards permission, Al-Biruni informs us that a Brāhmaṇa youth was allowed to marry a girl.[1] Though he mentions Brāhmaṇa youth, it was obligatory for all young men, belonging to the twice-born classes, if they were Brahmacārins. In this connection Manu's recommendation seems to have generally been followed. He says that, "(a student) who has studied in due order the three Vedas, or two or even one only, without breaking the (rules of) studentship shall enter the order of a householder."[2] He further adds, "having bathed, with the permission of his teacher and performed according to the rule the Saṃāvartana (the rite of returning home), a twice-born man shall marry a wife of equal caste who is endowed with auspicious (bodily) marks."[3] It also signifies that the stage of Brahmacarya was a primary condition to be fulfilled, which has been recommended by almost all the Smṛtis.[4]

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[1] Sharma, *Early Cauhan Dynasties*, p. 256.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.

[4] Ibid, II, p. 164. Here Al-Biruni discusses the share of unmarried daughter in the property of a dead father, which was to be spent on her at the time of her marriage by the heirs of the deceased.

[5] *Chachnama*, p. 43.

[6] Cf. *Ratnāvalī*, p. 3. *Bṛhatkathākoṣa*, p. 102, vv. 30-32 and Siddhasūri's *Upamitibhavaprapañcakathā* (10th century) p. 83, for the increasing anxiety of parents for the marriages of daughters. *Harṣacarita*, Ch. IV, pp. 104-41.

[7] *Manu.*, IX.4. Cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.24.9; III.293.35.

It may be pointed out that Al-Biruni's statement regarding permission of the teacher is based on the instruction of the Vāyupurāṇa, which deals with the subject.[5] In the time of Al-Biruni, as he observes, child marriages had been taking place frequently which were necessarily arranged by the parents. The question of taking permission from the teacher had little relevance in the case of those who were not attached to the Brahmacaryāśrama. One is inclined to believe that it had become customary on such occasion to seek the good wishes of the elders, including the teachers.

Qualifications of the Parties

About the qualifications of the bride and bridegroom we

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 131,
2. *Manu.*, III.2. Cf. *Yāj.*, I.52.
3. *Manu* , III.4. Cf. *Gautama*. IV.1. *Vas.*, VIII.1. *Yāj.*, I.52. Regarding the auspicious bodily marks. See *Śāmkhāyana Gṛ.S.*, I.5.10; *Manu.* III.7-10; *Viṣṇu* , XXIV.11; *Yāj* , I.54; *Saṃskāra Prakāśa*, pp. 752-54.
4. It would be interesting to note the view of *Kāmandaka* (II.23) that a young man who fulfils the recommended qualification to be a bridegroom can marry a bride without taking the permission of his master.
5. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Book. III. Ch. IX.

do not get any detailed information from Muslim writers. An important qualification for both parties was that they should belong to the same caste and their status too should be equal. Al-Biruni says, "every man of caste may marry a woman of his own caste."[1] No doubt it was the best course to marry a girl of one's own caste. The Gṛhyasūtras lay down that a man should marry a maiden belonging to his own caste.[2] Manu holds the same view.[3] Hsuan Tsang says that the marriage within the same caste was preferred.[4] As regards equality of status, it seems to have been followed normally. Marvazi says that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings (Ballahra) took ladies from the king called Ja ba (?).[5] The Hudud Alam also confirms this fact the matrimonial relations were established within the royal familes themselves.[6] The Chachnama records that Daharsiah sent his sister Bai to Allor in order that she might be given away to the king of Batiah.[7] Though there was no bar for the kings to have wives of the other castes, yet people who were governed by the laws and customs of the Varṇa system must have followed the rules and regulations relating to marriage within the caste but outside gotra and pravara. One of the most important considerations in marriage was beauty of the bride. The Chachnama records the attributes of Janki, Drohar's sister, who had 'seduced a world with her blandishments and coquetry and made princes mad with desire.'[8] She was beautiful and possessed of great charms. She was elegant in stature as the juniper tree, generous in disposition, her words were like a string of pearls, her eyes handsome and her cheeks like tulips or rubies.[9] Janki fell in love with Jaisiya, the son of Dahir, who too was of princely

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp 155-156.
2. *Mān. Gṛ*, I.7-8; *Jaimini Gṛ.S.*, I.20
3. *Manu.*, III.4; cf. *Yāj.*, I.52.
4. Watters. I, p. 168.
5. Marvazi., p. 47 (48).
6. *Hudud*, p. 91 (45).
7. *Chachnama*, p. 43.
8. Elliot , I, p. 198.
9. Ibid, Mirza Kalichbeg attaches these qualifications with Jaisiya. *Chachnama*, p. 182.

birth, possessed a handsome face and was "unequalled in bravery and wisdom."[1] Ufi informs us that Bhaharam Ghur demanded Shankal's daughter in marriage, whose beauty outshone the sun and her figure shamed the cypress.[2] It is thus clear that apart from other considerations beauty was an extremely important consideration in royal marriages (which sometimes resulted in dynastic conflicts).[3] It was also desired by the common people. There are instances of even illegal marriages, which took place on account of bride's beauty. Kalhaṇa says that Rudrapāla married the moonfaced Āśāmatī, the daughter of Indu Candra, the lord of Jalamdhara, only on account of her beauty.[4] Sometimes married women, after being made Devadāsīs, could be wedded with other men as legal wives because of their charm.[5] But broadly speaking, general qualifications common at all times and in all societies were wealth, health, intelligence and good family. They applied to all selections of the bride and bridegroom, as recommended by the Mahābhārata and others.[6] Virginity was one of the qualifications considered most worthy for a bride to be given in marriage.[7] It was one of the reasons why widow marriages were generally not favoured.

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[1] Elliot., I. p. 201,

[2] Elliot, II, p. 161.

[3] The relations of Pṛthvīrāja III and Jayacandra were largely determined by the episode of Samyogitā.

[4] *Rāj.*, VII.150-152. *Manu*, however, allows a man to marry a girl even from an inferior or bad family provided she is a jewel among women (*Manu.*, II.238).

[5] *KSS*, XV.76. Narendraprabhā, the wife of a merchant, was again married with king Dhurlabhaka Pratāpāditya II of Kashmir, who fell in love and wanted her to be his wife. For this purpose she was made a Devadāsī and married again with the king (*Rāj.*, IV. 36).

[6] *Mbh.*, I.131.10. Cf. Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 429-438.

[7] *Gaut.*, IV.1; *Vas.*, VIII.8; *Yāj*, I.52; *Manu.*, III.4.12.
We may refer here to the talk of the virgin daughter of Dahar, Suryadeo, with the Khalifa. When she was presented before him by Kasim she said, "I am not worthy of the king's bed, because Kasim kept us three days near himself before he sent us to the royal residence. Perhaps it is a custom among you; but such ignominy should not be suffered by kings." (Elliot, I, p. 209.).

Forbidden Degrees in Marriage

Let us now consider the restrictions relating to marriage settlements. While marriage within the same caste was preferred, it was prohibited within certain degrees of relationship. Sulayman wrongly says that the Indian were free to marry women of their choice.[1] It seems that Sulayman was unaware of the various laws and customs relating to Indian marriages. Mutahhar is more correct when he points out that the Indians did not marry their near relatives.[2] In this connection Al-Biruni's remarks are noteworthy. He writes that a man may marry one to four wives according to his caste. But "every man of a caste may marry a woman of his own caste or one of the castes or caste below his, but no body is allowed to marry a woman of caste superior to his own."[3] About the forbidden degrees of marriage he gives a more accurate picture. He writes, "According to their marriage law it is better to marry a stranger than a relative. The more distant the relationship of a woman with regard to her husband the better. It is absolutely forbidden to marry related women both of the direct descending line, viz., a grand-daughter or great-grand-daughter, and of the direct ascending line, viz., a mother, grand-mother, or great-grand-mother. It is also forbidden to marry collateral relations, viz., a sister, a niece, a maternal or paternal aunt and their daughters, except in case the couple of relations who want to marry each other be removed from each other by five consecutive generations. In that case the prohibition is waived, but, notwithstanding, such a marriage is an object of dislike to them."[4] We may quote here the observations of Hsuan Tsang, "The members of the caste marry within the caste, the great and the obscure keeping apart. Relations whether by the father's or the mother's side do not inter-marry."[1] Hsuan Tsang's observation, though brief, confirms Al-Biruni's statement. The inscriptions of the early medieval period have many references to the matrimonial alliances between ruling families which were distant relations.[2] Ibn Battuta also writes that "Hindus do not marry among their relatives, unless-those who are cousins six times removed."[3]

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[1] Sulayman, *Akhbar*, p. 24. Nainar, p. 103, "They marry as many women as they desire." Cf. Sulayman, p. 34.

[2] Mutahhar, IV, p. 12.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 155-156.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 155. In the *Chachnama* it is mentioned that Dahar married his sister Bai, though she was born of another Jat-mother, i.e., step-mother of Dahar. That marriage was however condemned and treated with contempt (*Chachnama*, pp. 45-48). Kalhaṇa condemns king Harṣa of Kashmir, who had violated the chastity of his sisters (*Rāj.*, VII.1147-1148). We are told that Parmardi, the last great Candela ruler, had

The Smṛtis disallow marriage with a sapiṇḍa and sagotra girl[4] on the ground of its being viruddhasambandha. The Gṛhya Pariśiṣṭa prescribes. 'one should marry a girl with whom there is no viruddhasambandha (incompatible relations), e.g., the daughters of one's wife's sister or the sister of one's paternal uncle's wife (these should not be married).[5] Medhātithi and Viśvarūpa disallowed marriage with a maternal uncle's and paternal aunt's daughter.[6] But in South India marriage among the relations by the mother's side was permissible.[7] Referring to forbidden degrees Manu holds, "A (damsel) who is neither a sapiṇḍa on the mother's side, nor belongs to the same family on the father's side, is recommended to twice-born men for wedlock and conjugal union."[8] It

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established illicit connection with his own sister (*ASRI*, Vol. **XXI**, pp, 70-71). But these examples should be taken as exception to matrimonial relationship. They are too few to be taken serious notice of.

[1] Watters, p. 168.

[2] *EI*, I, p. 264; **II**, p. 13; IV, p. 247; **IX**, pp. 319-328; **XI**, p. 216; XVIII, pp. 304; **XXI**, p. 43; *IA*, **XV**, p. 308, **XVIII**. p. 215.

[3] Ibn Battuta, p. 228.

[4] *Vyās*, II.2. (SS, p. 350); *Vasiṣṭha*, VIII.1-2 (SS, p. 200). *Śaṁkh*., IV.1. (SS, p. 376).

[5] *Gṛhya Pariśṣṭa*, quoted in *Nirṇayasindhu*, p. 289. Cf. Kane, HDS, II, pp. 467-469.

[6] On *Manu*, II.18. *Viśvarūpa* on Yāj., III. 254.

[7] *Baudhāyana* refers to the custom of cousin-marriage being popular in South India, but declares it to be condemnable. *Baudh. Dh.S.*, I.1.2.2-3.

[8] *Manu*., III.5. Cf. Yāj., I 53. *Ap*. II.11.15-19. *Gaut*, IV.2-5. *Baudh*., II.1.32-38, VI., **XXIV**, 9-10.

was laid down that the parties to marriage should not be sapiṇḍas, i.e., related to each other within seven generations on the father's side and five generations on the mother's side.[1] Sometimes this sapiṇḍa was contracted to five and three generations only.[2]

Marriage Settlement

According to marriage customs the preliminary part of the marriage ceremonies began with the Vāgadānam (Betrothal) or Var-Varaṇa. In this connection Sulayman remarks that when both parties desired to marry, they came to an agreement and then presents were made according to their status and position and finally marriage was celebrated. It was also customary among them to announce a marriage by playing cymbals and tambourines.[3] Al-Biruni says that parents arranged the marriages of their children in an early age.[4] We are told by the Vīsaladevarāso that the male members of the family settled the marriages, which were formally approved by the female members.[5] That is marriages were settled by the sweet will and consent of parents. This system may be partly ascribed to rigid parental control exercised over the children. Moreover, in view of the young age of the parties, as Al-Biruni remarks, they could not make an intelligent choice. When the father was not alive it was the duty of the brother's or guardian's to arrange the marriages of girls.[6]

The Chachnama informs us that sometimes the bridegroom

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1. Kane. *HDS*, II. p. 464.
2. Altekar, *Position of Women*, p. 75.
3. Sulayman, p. 33. Cf. Nainar, p. 103. *Akhbar*, p. 24.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.
5. In this matter male members had the final say. According to the *Mālatī-mādhava*, in the final selection of the son-in-law, the father alone had the absolute authority (p- 50). On the father's authority Bāṇa writes that, "The mothers are nothing more than nurses in bestowing them. The father is the final authority, said the mother of Rājyaśrī (*Harṣacarita*, II. 141). In the *Vīsaladevarāso* it is mentioned that the male members of the family settled the marriage which was formally approved by the female members (I. 13-23).
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154. *Chachnama*, p. 43. See p. 84.

himself was interested in marrying a royal princess and he sent a messenger for this purpose.[1] It was a common practice in the royal families that proposals for bride were made by bridegrooms. Bāṇa writes that when Prabhākaravardhana decided to arrange the marriage of Rājyaśrī, many proposals came from a number of royal houses.[2] Kalhaṇa also says that for wedding the Cola princess Raṇarambhā, proposals were received from many rulers of different parts of the country.[3] The Kathāsaritsāgara provides references that usually to marry a girl marriage proposals were made from the side of the bridegroom.[4] It may be noted that this practice had existed in some form from Ṛgvedic times.[5] In medieval times, however, the custom of bridegrooms' approach in person to the brides' house fell into disuse and was followed by the bridegrooms' father on behalf of his son.[6] Now approaches are made from the side of the bride's father.

Dowry System

As regards dowry as a part of the settlement of marriage, it can be safely said that it was generally unknown in ancient India. There are no direct references denoting the nature of dowry in the modern sense either in the Smṛtis or in other works relating to the pre-nuptial contract of payment offered by the bride's father as a settlement of her marriage. In the Brāhma form of marriage the Smṛtis, however, recommend that the bride's father should give his daughter in marriage duly prepared with suitable ornaments according to his status and capacity.[7] It is only in the early medieval period that the system came into vogue, but it seems that it was mainly

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1. *Chachnama*, p. 43. Cf. Elliot, I, p. 154.
2. *Harṣacarita*, IV. pp. 122-23.
3. *Rāj-*, III, 432-434.
4. *KSS*, LV.85-88; IX. 37-38; LXXXI.32-33; LXXVI.8; CIV.63; LXXX. 9-16.
5. *Ṛgveda*, X.85.9.14, 33.
6. The *Vāgadānavidhi* quoted by Gadādhara on *Pār. Gṛ.S.* The Betrothal ceremony ended with the Blessings of the Brāhmaṇas (R.B. Pandey, *The Hindu Saṁskāras*, p. 360).
7. *Manu.*, III. 27. Cf. *Mbh.*, I.102,12-13; XIII.46.2.

confined to the royal and richer section of the society. We learn from the Chachnama that when the proposal of marriage of Daharsiah's sister came from the king of Batiah Daharsiah, he, being the elder brother "prepared a royal dowry and set with her 700 young horses and 500 brave Thākurs". The king of Batiah had stipulated that a fort should be handed over to him as her marriage portion".[1] Ufi, while referring to a royal marriage, says that Shankal gave his daughter in marriage to Bahram Ghur, and with her also gave many gifts and presents.[2] In this connection Kalhaṇa informs that Durlabhavardhana got from one family both the earth and a princess.[3] It may be remarked that in the royal and rich families the system of rich dowry prevailed. But as regards the common practice, the statement of Sulayman is nearer the truth. He says that "in marriage both the parties came to an agreement, then presents were made. These presents consisted of money and in this every one does what he can offer."[4] It seems that it was a voluntary gift and was not treated as conditional. Al-Biruni also writes that no gift was settled between them. 'The man gives only a present to the wife as he thinks fit, and a marriage gift in advance which he has no right to claim back.'[5] It was thus a gift made out of affection and was not a part of marriage settlement. It was generally known as 'Kanyādhanam' or 'Yautuka'. We know that large sums of money, gifts and jewelleries were given to the girls in marriage.[6]

It may be noted that unmarried daughters had a right in the property of dead fathers. Quoting Manu, Al-Biruni writes that if she was unmarried her share was spent on her at the time of her marriage, "and her dowry was bought by means of her share."[1] We may conclude that after the death of her father the guardians of the girl gave her some share in his property, which he would have given, if alive, as a gift to the daughter at the time of marriage.

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[1] *Chachnama*, p. 43; Elliot, I, p. 154.

[2] Elliot, II, p. 161.

[3] *Rāj.*, IV.2. Bāṇa informs that at the marriage of Rājyaśrī Prabhākaravardhana gave horses, elephants, ornaments, costly costumes, etc. (*Harṣacarita*, Ch. IV).

[4] Sulayman, p. 134. Nainar, p. 103. *Akhbar*, p. 24.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.

[6] *Samaricchakahā*, pp. 93-101.

Astrological Considerations

As regards astrological considerations in the settlement of marriage, the Gṛhyasūtras and Dharmasūtras do not suggest that before settling marriage the horoscope of the parties should be consulted. Dr. Altekar opines that during the period 400-900 A.D. the astrological consideration began to play a considerable part in the settlement of marriage.[2] The Chachnama says that when the marriage proposal of Bai came, Dahar, her brother, went to the astrologer's house to consult him about her marriage.[3] In the Daśakumāracarita we are told that the astrologers were consulted by the parents of brides.[4] In a society in which the astrologers were present, it was natural for the parents to consult them. In course of time when superstition grew strong, the houses of astrologers attracted all those who wanted a prosperous married life for their children.[5] Prompted by superstition that the man who married his sister would be the king of Indie, Dahar decided to marry his own sister.[6]

The Age of Marriage

The age of marriage varied considerably from time to time and from caste to caste. In early times, generally, adult girls were given in marriage. We have many references to post-puberty marriages in the Ṛgveda[7] and the earlier Gṛhyasūtras.[8] The epics refer to fully grown up, healthy and beautiful girls, which indicate that post-puberty marriages were a general practice.[1] As regards men, there were no definite rules as to the age before which they were permitted to marry. A young man of more than twenty years was considered fit to be married. Al-Biruni informs us that a Brāhmaṇa was allowed by his master to marry when the second period (Gṛhasthāśrama) of his life began from the twenty-fifth year.[2] Al-Biruni's observation seems quite near the truth when it is examined in the context of the general practice among the Hindus. After the Upanayana Saṁskāra Vedic study for the twice-born boys was permissible. The period of Vedic study was nearly twelve years, which varied according to the castes. After completion of their studies they were allowed to marry. According to the Hindu view of life, this was the first stage of life, i.e., Brahmacaryāśrama, which generally continued for twenty-five years.[3]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 164. Cf. *Manu.*, IX.118.

[2] Altekar, *op. cit.*, p. 72.

[3] *Chachnama*, p. 46; Elliot, I, p. 155.

[4] *Daśakumāracarita* (Nirṇaya Sāgar Ed.), p. 219.

[5] *Chachnama*, p. 46.

[6] Ibid.

[7] R.B. Pandey, *The Hindu Saṁskāras*, pp. 316-317. Cf. B.S. Upadhyaya, *Women in Ṛgveda*, pp. 50-54.

[8] Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpsūtras*, p. 212.

Child Marriage

The age of girls for marriage has been discussed at length in the Dharmaśāstras. On this subject Al-Biruni makes some interesting remarks. He says that the Hindus of his time arranged marriages of their sons, because they took place at a very young age.[4] At another place he informs us that no Brāhmaṇa was allowed to marry a girl who was above twelve.[5] This practice, in fact, still exists to some extent. Al-Biruni's remarks, which seem to be based on his personal observations, also agree with the provisions of the Dharmaśāstras. The Vaikhānas Smārta Sūtra says that a Brāhmaṇa youth should marry a girl (of the same varṇa) who has not crossed the stages of a naganikā or gaurī. According to this provision, a naganikā is a girl over eight years but less than ten, and a gaurī is one who is between ten and twelve and has not yet attained puberty.[1] Several Gṛhyasūtras lay down that the girls were given in marriage just before they attained puberty or immediately after it. According to them, she must be a naganikā, that is a girl of tender age or who has not yet attained puberty.[2] These provisions of the Gṛhyasūtras were generally followed by the Smṛtis which generally agreed that the pre-puberty marriage was an ideal.[3] This indicates that the tendency towards child marriage was gaining ground. The Dharmaśāstras lay down that a girl should be married between the age of seven and twelve. Between this period she attains the stages of gaurī, kanyā and rajaswalā.[4] Though they differ as to what should be the age corresponding to each stage, all agree that after these stages the marriage of a girl is an extremely sinful act. They condemn not only the parents but also the husband.[5] According to the Brahma Purāṇa, after the age of four a girl can be given in marriage at any time.[6] Medhātithi, while agreeing with the previous authorities, recommends eight years as the right time for a girl to be given in marriage. In his view a man should marry a girl comparatively very young.[7] It has been further suggested that under no circumstances should the marriage of a girl be postponed beyond the age of ten.[8]

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[1] S. Jayal, *The Status of Women in the Epics*, pp. 42-43.

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 131.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 130-133. Cf. *Manu.*, II, 177-197.

[4] Ibid, p. 154.

[5] Ibid, p. 131. The neighbouring countries like Al-Arhan of India too observed the rules of Hindu marriages. Marvazi says that the inhabitants of this land 'marry their sons just as they give away their daughters (at an early age) considering this the proper thing" (Marvazi, p. 63.). Ibn Rusta also observes that the people of Qumar "marry their children, girls and boys, when they are small" (Ibn Rusta, p. 133.).

It may, however, be pointed out that extreme view of the law-givers did not find acceptance in its entirety. We learn from Al-Biruni that during his times the normal age of a

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1. *Vaikhānas*, VI.12.
2. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 440-445. *Parāśara*, VII.7.
3. *Samāvarta*, 66-67 (SS, p. 114); *Parāśara*, II.7; *Vyāsa*, II.7 (SS, p. 356); *Śaṁkha*, XV.8 (*SS*, p. 388).
4. *Gautam* , XVIII.21-23; *Gobhila Gṛ.*, III.4-5; *Manu.*, IX.88,94; *Yāj.*, I.13-14; *Vasi.*, XVI.70,
5. Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 43-446.
6. *Brahma Purāṇa*, 165-8. Cf. *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 83.44.
7. On *Manu*. IX. 89. 90-92. Cf. *Parāśara*, XII. 5-6.
8. *Bṛhadyama*, III.21-22.

Brāhmaṇa bride was twelve.[1] Parāśara fixes eight, nine and ten years for a gaurī, rohinī and kanyā respectively, and after ten a girl is called rajaswalā. If she is given in marriage beyond this age, her parents as well as her elder brothers go to hell. He further remarks that if a Brāhmaṇa youth marries such a girl, he becomes the husband of a Vṛṣli and should not be admitted to dinner in company of the other members of his caste.[2] The Nītivākyāmṛta prescribes sixteen years for a boy and not more than twelve for a girl for marriage.[3] Thus Al-Biruni's conclusion relating to early marriage by and large agrees with the recommendations of the Smṛtis. Although he does not give the exact age of marriage except in the case of Brāhmaṇas (which is twelve), this would very clearly suggest that the age at which a girl was given away in marriage was definitely less than twelve. Thus child marriages became an established institution of Hindu society. We are informed that the Paramāra princess Rājamatī was married to the Chahamana king Vīsaladeva III at the age of twelve.[4] The marriages of the daughter of Parihāra Mahārāya of Mandovara and Ishchhinī the Parmāra princess of Abu with Pṛhvīrāja III were child marriages.[5] The marriage of Kadamba of Goa, the heir-apparent, with the daughter of Vikramāṅka Cālukya of Kalyāna also falls in the category of child marriage. Although these marriages were somewhat of political nature intended to bring about peace between the rival families, they clearly establish that child marriages were quite common among the Hindus.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 131. Cf. Somadeva, *Yaśastilaka Campū*, p. 317. *Nītivākyāmṛta*, 31. Bhavabhūti describes the Marriage of Sītā when she was a child (Śiśu), which differs from the description and the age of Sītā as described in *Rāmāyana* (*Uttar Rāmacarita*, I.20).

[2] *Parāśara*, XII.5-6; VII.6-9. Cf. *Aṅgiras*, 126-128. *Medhātithi on Manu*, IX.92. *Smṛticandrikā*, I, pp. 73, 81. *Sambandhaviveka*, *New IA.*, Vol. IV, p. 254.

[3] *Nītivākyāmṛta*, XI.28, XXX.1. Marriages were arranged sometimes even before birth. *Tattvaprakāśa by* Bhojadeva, p. 52.

[4] *Vīsaladeva Rāso*, II. 7.

[5] *Pṛthvīrāja Rāso*, *Samaya* VII.

It is difficult to say when and under what circumstances this practice was accepted by the Hindus. We have different views on this aspect of child marriage. C.V. Vaidya opines that child marriage had come into vogue between 600 and 1000 A.D.[1] Dr. Altekar, while commenting on Al-Biruni's observation, writes, "Parents in the lower section of society where the pernicious custom of the bride price prevailed to a great extent were the first to take advantage of the permission to marry girls at the age of 5 or 6 for their own selfish ends. Their examples were later on followed by other classes and the custom of very young marriages thus began to be more and more common."[2] He thinks that during the period from about the 8th or the 9th century A.D., child marriages became more popular.[3]

Princely Marriages

But pre-puberty marriage does not seem to be the general rule for all. At any rate the ruling families would not have bound themselves by the extreme restrictions of the law-givers regarding the age of marriage for girls. The Chachnama mentions that Chacha's daughter Bai was a grown up woman. When Daharsiah, her elder brother, came to know that his sister had reached the age of maturity, he became anxious to see her married.[4] It is said that unmarried Janki, sister of Drohar, was in love with Jaisiya, the son of Dahar of Sindh.[5] It also indicates that she was quite grown up.

The custom of Svayaṁvara among the ruling Rajput chiefs suggests that the girls were sometimes married when they were fairly grown up. They could, as it was understood, select bridegrooms of their choice from an open competition. In this connection we can refer to the two Svayaṁvaras

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1. C.V. Vaidya : *HMHI*, III, p. 396.
2. Altekar : *op. cit.*, p. 59.
3. Ibid.
4. *Chachnama*, p. 43; Elliot., I, p. 154.
5. Ibid, p. 43; Elliot, p. 198. Post-puberty marriages were in vogue about 600 A.D. Bāṇa mentions that prabhākaravardhana was anxious for the marriage of his daughter, Rājyaśrī, who had already attained puberty. (*Harṣacarita, Ucchwāsa IV*).

described by Hemacandra in Dvāśrayamahākāvya and Jayānaka in Pṛthvīrājavijaya. Mahendra of Nadol (c. 1000 A.D.) held the Svayaṁvara of his two sisters Durlabhādevī and Lakṣmī.[1] The Pratihāra ruler of Kanauj—Bhoja (c. 836-888 A.D.) married Kalāvatī the Cauhāna princess. Twelve kings contested for her in an open assembly. She was presumably of marriageable age.[2] We may also mention the marriage of the Gāhaḍavāla princess Saṁyogitā with Rai Pithaurā. She was quite young and wished to be married with the Cauhāna monarch.[3] These examples point to the maturity of the girls, without which it would not have been possible for them to choose partners of their liking in an open competition. As regards post-puberty marriage, we may refer to the marriage of the eighteen-year old Jalhaṇā, the daughter of Śākambharī ruler Arṇorāja, with the fifty-seven year old Kumārapāla, the Caulukya king of Anhilpātana.[4] We may conclude then that post-puberty marriages had been frequently taking place among the ruling families, which did not accord with the provisions of the Dharmaśāstras. This is also supported by the absence of pre-puberty marriages in the Rājataraṅgiṇī. A story of the Deśopadeśa of Kṣemendra relates that girls were married at a mature age.[5] Further in the Samskrita dramas we find grown up heroines engaged in marriage scenes. Indian sex literature recommends fully grown-up girls for the purpose of sexual relationship, which is also evident in Indian sculpture, which depicts well-developed female figures. In conclusion, we can say that while in the ruling and aristocratic families the marriageable age of girls was high in general society the people followed the provisions of the Dharmaśāstras. The Brāhmaṇa girls, as Al-Biruni says, were married at an early age and most probably other castes followed their examples.

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1. *Dvāśrayakāvya*, VII. 66, 77, 74.
2. *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, V. 32; Cf. Sharma : *op. cit.* pp. 26, 124.
3. *Pṛthvīrāja Rāso : Jangamakathā*, *Samaya LX*, *Rāsosāra*, p. 241.
4. *Dvāśrayakāvya*, XIX, vv. 21-35.
5. *Deśopadeśa*, VII.

Causes of Child-Marriage.

No specific reasons have been given for prepuberty marriages in ancient Indian literature. P.V. Kane observes that ancient Indian writers should not be held up to ridicule for their recommendations regarding the lower age of marriage. He thinks that this practice was prevalent throughout the civilized world.[1] Why was it so in India ? The reasons accounting for this development cannot be given with certainty. Some have suggested that, on grounds of religious sentiments, the Smṛti writers recommended early marriages of girls. Another view is that this custom came into vogue as a means of protection of a Hindu girl from being forcibly taken away by the Muslims. C.V. Vaidya holds that it was a sure weapon to save Hindu girls from becoming Buddhist nuns. It was a common practice among the Buddhists to encourage grown up women to become nuns.[2] Professor A.L. Basham advances other reasons. According to him, the growing religious insistence on the necessity of progeny and the sexuality of the Indian character in relation with the high ideal of pre-marriage chastity may have been partly responsible for it. Besides, Basham thinks that from the economic point of view the daughter was a serious liability to her parents, which may have encouraged the custom.[3] There is an element of force in these arguments. A great desire to have more sons probably led the people to think and act in the direction of child marriage. Al-Biruni writes that the people showed greater delight at the birth of sons,[4] who were not only to help in later years in meeting the economic needs of the family, but also they were a factor in acquiring religious merits after the death of the parents.[5] One of the purposes of marriage was that the wife enabled a man to perform religious rites and the sons were supposed to save a man from hell.[6] Dr. R.B. Pandey,

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1. Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 446.
2. C.V. Vaidya : *HMHI, III*, p. 395.
3. A.L. Basham ; *Wonder that was India*, p. 167.
4. Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.
5. Ibid, II, p, 165.
6. *Manu* , IX. 28; *Āp.Dh.S.*, II.5.11.12; *Mit. on Yāj.*, I.78; Cf Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 429.

while emphasising the political reasons behind this evil practice, thinks that the ease-loving and luxurious life of the Aryans led them towards an early sexual life. Foreign invasions might have also forced Hindu parents to marry their daughters at an early age. They were concerned to save their women from ill-treatment by invaders.[1] Dr. A.S. Altekar gives, among other reasons, the ramification of the caste-system, prohibition of inter-caste marriages and difficulties in selection of suitable bridegrooms. According to him, the upper section of society began to follow the example of the members of lower classes who married their daughters at an early age because of the pernicious custom of the bride price which prevailed among them. The Satī system might also have forced the parents to think of early marriage. He further says, "If the father is dead and the mother followed him on his funeral pyre, there would be a father-in-law at least to look after the young orphans, if they were already married. So why not provide them with an additional guardian of natural affection by marrying at an early age."[2]

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Al-Biruni and other Muslim writers nowhere discuss the causes of this practice. They deal with the prohibition of intercaste marriage and the prevalence of the practice of Satī. One is inclined to agree with Dr. Altekar that while the first restricted the area of choice, the second acted in favour of giving away girls at an early age. There is also some truth in C.V. Vaidya's argument that the child marriage provided some sort of protection against women becoming Buddhist nuns. The view that owing to the fear of the Muslims the practice was adopted, is speculative. Child marriages had been in full vogue before the Muslim had become a powerful force in Indian life. However, one may feel inclined to believe that after the establishment of Muslim rule in India, there was further increase in the incidences of child marriages.

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[1] R.B. Pandey : *Hindu Saṁskāras*, pp. 321-22, and *Hindi Sahitya ki Pithika*, Vol. I, p. 19.

[2] Altekar : *op. cit*, pp. 59-60.

Marriage Ceremonies and Rites

Marriage being a very important sacrament, it was performed with great pomp and show coupled with elaborate rituals. Writing about the royal marriage ceremony, Ufi remarks that Shankal made such magnificent preparations for the marriage ceremony of his daughter that "they became the topic of conversation amongst all people."[1] Sulayman says that the beating of cymbals and drums were included in this ceremony.[2] This fact is corroborated by the Vīsaladeva Rāso, which informs us that marriage ceremonies were attended with bands and other musical instruments, such as flute, drums, etc.[3]

Describing the rites of marriage of his times in India, Al-Biruni writes, "On that occasion the Brahmanas perform the rites of the sacrifices and they as well as others receive alms."[4]

The Chachnama gives an account of a royal marriage ceremony, which was observed in Sindh in the beginning of the 8th century. Dahar, who decided to marry his own sister, at the time of marriage, put his own scarf on her head and adorned her with rings and other ornaments. His sword was placed in her lap and with that all the familiar nuptial ceremonies were performed. Then he tied a corner of her scarf to that of his own and seated her on the throne of the kingdom by his side under the (royal) canopy."[5] In the Tarikh Massumi there is reference to the bride and the bridegroom going several times round a fire.[6] This evidently is the rite of Agnipradakṣiṇā. The ceremonies mentioned above are included in the Brāhma type of marriage rites, consisting of Homa, Pāṇigrahaṇa, Asmarohaṇa, Agnipradakṣiṇā and Saptapadī. These were regarded as important rites without which the marriage was incomplete.[7] After the performance of this rite the girl could not be given to any one else and the couples were united for ever. In this connection Al-Biruni rightly observes that "husband and wife can only be separated by death."[1] His remark confirms the importance of the rite of Saptapadī. It may, however, be pointed out that the Muslim writers do not mention all the rites connected with the Brāhma type of marriage. We may presume that they were observed in early medieval India in which the Brāhmaṇas continued to dominate the Hindu mind. Marriage was treated as a religious sacrament and was performed by the Brāhmaṇas, as Al-Biruni rightly observes.[2]

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[1] Elliot, II, p. 33.

[2] Sulayman, p. 33.

[3] *Vīsaladevarāso*, *Canto*. I and II.

[4] Al-Biruni, Vol. II, p. 154.

[5] *Chachnama*, p. 46.

[6] Ibid, p. 47.

[7] *Pār Gr S.*, I.8.1; *Manu.*, VIII.232; *Yāj.*,I. 78.

Nuptial Fees or Gifts to the Priest

As regards nuptial fees, Al-Biruni remarks that in the end Brāhmaṇas (priests), who conducted the nuptials, and others received gifts.[3] This may be corroborated by some Gṛhyasūtras which recommend that at the conclusion of the wedding the bridegroom gives away gifts to the priest. They suggest that the priest or ācārya must receive a cow from a Brāhmaṇa, a village from a rājanya, and a horse from a Vaiśya. They also add that one hundred cows and a chariot should be given to the father of the bride.[4] In our times gifts have become symbolical. These are generally made in the form of some hard cash and cloths; the father of the bride does not receive any kind of gifts, because after performing kanyādāna, he should not accept anything belonging to the side of the bridegroom.[5]

Inter-caste Marriage : Anuloma

Although marriage within the caste was preferred,[6] inter-caste marriages, no doubt small in number, also took place occasionally. These were mostly anuloma marriages. The

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 154.
2. Ibid, For detail see. R.B. Pandey : *Hindu Saṁskāras*, pp. 361, 384.
3. For detail see R.B. Pandey : *Hindu Saṁskāras*, pp. 361-84.
4. *Mān. Gṛ.*, I.11, 27. *Kāṭh. Gṛ.S* , 25,40.; *Pār. Gṛ* , I.8,14-18; Ap *Dh.S* , II.5.11.18; *Vasi.* Dh. S., I.36.
5. R.B Pandey : *op.cit.* p. 384.
6 Al.Biruni, II, p. 155; Watters, I, p. 168.

Smṛti rules were not so rigid in this case as in that pratiloma marriages.[1] On this point the accounts of the Muslim writers are noteworthy. Ibn Khurradadhbih says that the Brāhmaṇas could marry the Kṣatriya girls, when the Kṣatriyas were not allowed to marry Brāhmaṇa girls.[2] Marvazi and Gardizi also point out this practice. They remark that while the Brāhmaṇa did not give their daughters to the Kṣatriyas, they married the girls of the Kṣatriyas [3] Al-Biruni says, "Some Hindus think that the number of the wives depends upon the caste, that accordingly, a Brāhmaṇa may take four, a Kṣatriya three, a Vaśiya two wives and a Śūdra one. Every man of a caste may marry a woman of his own caste or one of the castes or caste below him, but no body is allowed to marry a woman of a caste superior to his own."[4] It was laid down that the best course was to marry a girl of one's own caste.[5] Manu recommends that a Brāhmaṇa may take as wife a woman of any caste, a Kṣatriya may marry a woman of his own caste or Vaiśya or a Śūdra woman, a Vaiśya may marry a woman of his own caste or a Śūdra woman, and a Śūdra may marry only a Śūdra woman.[6] Lakṣmīdhara, while agreeing with Manu's provisions, adds that if a twice-born girl is not available, a twice-born man may marry from one of the lower castes.[7] Thus the rule of marriage was that a man could marry a woman of his own caste or a caste below his own and no body was allowed to take a girl as his wife from a caste superior to his own. This provision supports the statement of Al-Biruni. In the Kathāsaritsāgara we have a number of references to the anuloma type of marriages.[8]

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1. *Manu.*, IX. 178; *Vasiṣṭha*, XVIII, 2-6; *Auśānasa*, 36.
2. Elliot, I, p. 16; Nainar, p. 130.
3. Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi. p. 627.
4. Al-Biruni, II, pp 155-156.
5. *Mān. Gṛ.*, I.78; *Jamini Gṛ. S.*, I.20.
6. *Manu.*, III.13; Cf. Yāj. I.56; *Vas.*, I.25-26; VI.S., XXIV. 1-4; *Gaut* Dh S., IV. 2-5; 12-7; *Baudh. Dh.S.* I.8.10-2; *Mbh.*, XIII. 48, 4.8.
7. Kṛtya. *Gṛ.*, pp. 38, 44.
8. *KSS*, XXV.171, XVIII.203; XII.82,101; LXXXIV.57-58; XXIV. 42; XVIII.265-267; LXXXIII.35-36; XVIII.74-80; XXI.56-57; X. 146; XXVI.156; XXV. 208.

There are epigraphical evidences also to support it.[1] Besides, there are some historical examples which may be cited to illustrate this practice. Brāhmaṇa Rājaśekhara, the jewel of the Pratihāra court, married a Cāhamāna lady Avantisundarī.[2] Similarly Lakṣmaṇa, the founder prince of the Cāhamāna dynasty of Nodola, had married a Vaiśya girl. The Jain Bhandaris of Marwar associate their pedigree with this union.[3] It is said that Khadgadhara Bhoja of Ranathambhora was associated with Hammīra as Vidura with Pāṇḍu.[4] The pratihāras of Mandor were the descendants of Brāhmaṇa Hariscandra and his Kṣatriya wife Bhadrā.[5] Yaśahkarṇadeve, the Cedi ruler, married a Hūṇa girl, whose family was inferior to that of the Cedis.[6] The Rājataraṅgiṇī mentions that Saṅgrāmarāja gave his daughter in marriage to a Brāhmaṇa.[7] Kṣemagupta, who was a Kṣatriya, married the famous Diddā, the daughter of a Lohara king (a khas chief).[8] These evidences will suffice to prove that intercaste marriages took place, though not as a general practice. Al-Biruni informs us that the Brāhmaṇas, though they were allowed to marry in other castes, never exercised this freedom and married only the women of their own caste[9] It was not a popular form of marriage during the early medieval period; it was mainly confined to the ruling families.

Pratiloma Marriages

As regards pratiloma marriages, we can assume that they had gone out of practice before our period. Though Idrisi, Marvazi and Gardizi mention such a type of Union, they were misinformed or could not understand the existing rules of marriage. Idrisi says that the Kṣatriyas married Brāhmaṇa women but the Brāhmaṇas did not take their women.[1] About the union of the twice-born with Śūdra women, Marvazi and Gardizi inform us that the Kṣatriyas married their (women) and gave them theirs while the Brāhmaṇs married theirs but did not give them (their own).[2] It may be remarked that the anuloma marriage of the twice-born with Śūdra women might have taken place, but pratiloma unions, viz. Brāhmaṇa girls and Kṣatriya men, and Kṣatriya girls and Śūdra men are not known to us. They are not mentioned in the literary works. We know that Bāṇa's father married a Śūdra girl and the poet had a Parāśara brother Caṇḍasena by name from this union.[3] The Tipperah grant also mentions that the Parāśara family originated from the union of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Śūdra mother.[4] Such references are not too many. Though the twice-born were allowed to marry women of castes lower than their own this was not looked upon favourably. The Smṛti writers do not favour such marriages and condemn them strongly. Gautama prescribes that a Brāhmaṇa husband of a Śūdra wife should not be invited to dinner.[5] The Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra says that a union of dvijāti with a Śūdra woman can never produce religious merit.[6] Yājñavalkya opines that a dvijāti should not marry a Śūdra girl.[7] Vasiṣṭha also disfavours it.[8] Medhātithi lays down that the Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya bridegroom in the tenth stage of his life should not marry a Śūdra girl even though she may be extremely beautiful.[9] Lakṣmīdhara also condemns the marriage with a Śūdra woman and does not recognise her as a sacramental wife. These marriages were generally intended for

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[1] EI, XV, p. 39; XVIII, p. 87; IV, p. 12; *ARS*, W. India, Vol. IV, p. 104; Cf. Kane : *HDS*, II, pp. 448-450.

[2] *Karpūramañjarī*, I.11.

[3] *SJM*, Vol. II, p. 102; *Purātanaprabandhasaṅgrah*, p. 102.

[4] *Hammīra Mahākāvya*, IX, vv. 153-155.

[5] *EI*, XVIII, p 95; *JRAS*, 1894, pp. 4-9.

[6] EI, II, p 4, V. 15.

[7] *Rāja* , VII.10-12.

[8] Ibid, I.316-317. Diddā also issued joint coins with her husband. (*Coins of Medieval India*, Pl. IV, No. 11).

[9] Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.

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1. Idrisi, p. 37; Nainar, p. 131; Elliot, I. p. 76.
2. Marvazi, p. 39; Gardizi, p 627.
3. *Harṣacarita, Ucchvāsa* I.
4. *EI*, XV, pp. 301-305.
5. *Gaut* , XV. 18.
6. *Viṣṇu Dh* S. XXVI. 5-6 (*SBE* Vol. VII, p. 112).
7. *Yāj* , I.57.
8. *Vasi* , I.25-27.
9. *On Manu* , III.12-13.

pleasure only.[1] Thus it is clear that the marriage of a Śūdra girl with a man of a higher caste was held in contempt. If anuloma marriages were looked upon with disfavour, pratiloma marriages could not be tolerated at any cost.

Intercaste Marriages not Favoured

Al-Biruni writes, 'Every man of a caste may marry a woman of his own caste'[2] and Hsuan Tsang also observes that 'Members of a caste marry within the caste.'[3] The wife of one's own caste was the only legitimate wife—the Dharmapatni. The Gṛhya Sūtras and the Smṛtis were unanimously of the opinion that the best course was to marry a girl of one's own caste. Thus intercaste marriages were restricted in number. The reason seems to be that caste rigidity was growing, and secondly sons of intercaste marriages were given a lower status, i.e., the status of mother's caste. This is confirmed by the statement of Al-Biruni, who says, "The child belongs to the caste of the mother, not to that of the father. Thus, e.g., if the wife of a Brāhmaṇa is a Brāhmaṇa, her child also is a Brāhmaṇa, if she is a Śūdra, her child is a Śūdra."[4] This is just what the Smṛtis lay down. Medhātithi presents the general rule about the status of sons born of intercaste marriages. In the case of anuloma marriage the son's caste becomes the mother's caste and in pratiloma marriage the son takes the caste of the father.[5] To illustrate our point, we may cite the evidence of the Pratihāras of Mandor. The sons born of the Kṣatriya Bhadrā, wife of Brāhmaṇa Hariścandra were known as Kṣatriyas after the caste of their mother.[6] According to Yājñavalkya, children by the union of a Brāhmaṇa father and a Śūdra mother are called Parāśara.[7] Manu also holds that anantara sons (sons born of the woman of the caste next to

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1. *Kṛt. Gṛ* , pp. 40, 44-45.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
3. Watters, I, p. 168.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
5. *On Manu* , X.6; Cf. *Mbh.*, XIII.48.4-8.
6. *EI*, XVIII, p. 95; *JRAS*, 1894, pp. 4-9.
7. Yāj , I.91-92.

that of the husband) belong to the caste of the father.[1] Vijñāneśvara is of opinion that a child's caste was determined by that of his mother.[2] Bāṇa's brother Candrasena belongs to the category of Parāśara.[3] Sons of castes lower than the father's were not entitled to a share in his property equal to that of the sons of the father's caste.[4] Their religious importance too was less than that of those who were born of Savarṇa wife. Sons of the same caste of father and mother were known as Aurasa and were considered superior to others, whereas sons of different castes of father and mother were not treated with equal respect.[5] In these circumstances, intercaste marriages, though allowed, were unpopular and fell gradually into disuse. This is why people preferred to marry within the caste. Marriage within the caste had become rather the general rule. A Khajuraho inscription tells us that Harṣa Candella married a suitable lady Kancuka of the Cāhamāna family, that is, a caste of equal status.[6] The Brāhmaṇa ministers of the Candellas took great care in choosing brides from savarṇa families.[7] There is clear evidence that intercaste marriage had been becoming rare. Altekar writes, "When Brāhmaṇas made their own group endogamous, other castes followed suit, and in course of time intercaste marriages even of the anuloma type; though permitted by Smṛtis, disappeared from society."[8] It seems that the teaching of the Mahabharata was generally observed that "an alliance of friendship or of marriage is possible between those two parties only who are evenly matched as far as character, education, culture and wealth are concerned."[9]

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[1] *Manu*, X 6.

[2] *Mit. on Yāj*, *Ācārādhyāya*, 91.

[3] *Harṣacarita*, *Ucchvāsa* I.

[4] *Manu*, X 152-153; *Yāj.*, II.125. Cf. *Gaut. Dh.S.*, XXVIII. 35 ff. *Vis.*, XVIII.1-5; Mbh., XIII.47.11-20.

[5] *Baudh. Dh.S.*, II.2.3.14 and 33. *Vas. Dh.S.*, XVIII. 13.

[6] *EI*, I, p. 126 vv. 20-21.

[7] Ibid, I, p. 200.

[8] Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 78.

[9] *Mbh.*, I.131.10.

Niyoga

Through the system of Niyoga (levirate), a sonless widow was allowed to raise offspring by her brother-in-law, but it had long passed into desuetude. The Dharmaśāstra legalised and allowed even for those women who had no sons by their living husbands, and if they were unable to procreate. Al-Biruni confirms it and records that though it was permissible in old days, it had gone out of vogue. He mentions the birth of Pāṇḍu through this system. He also compares it with an Arab system of procreating offspring by another person.[1] Even in the Mahābhārata Bhīṣma opines against the Niyoga practice.[2] Manu thinks the custom beastly.[3] Medhātithi says that though it was sanctioned by the Smṛtis, it was deprecated by the people.[4] Āpastamba and Bṛhaspati condemn it outright.[5] After 600 A.D. it went out of vogue. Asahāya, the 8th century commentator on Nārada, says that Niyoga and remarriage, though sanctioned by the Dharmaśāstra are prohibited by the society.[6] The Purāṇas composed after 600 A.D. express their views against this system. They include it among the customs not to be practised in the Kali age.[7] It is therefore clear that the statement of Al-Biruni that niyoga had gone out of practice in his days is correct.

Widow Marriage Prohibited

Like Niyoga, widow remarriage, which was allowed in the early centuries of the Christian era, did not take place in early medieval society. This is confirmed by Al-Biruni, who observes that a widow could not be remarried, and that she had to choose one of the two alternatives, i.e., either to remain a widow for the rest of her life or to burn herself. According to him the widows preferred the latter alternative, as they were likely to be ill-treated.[1] But in the Chachnama we are told that Chacha married widowed queens. Dahar too married the widow of his brother.[2] But in general a widow could not remarry, as Al-Biruni rightly says. His statement is based on personal observation and is also supported by the Smṛtis. Āpastamba condemns remarriage.[3] According to Manu, Yajñavalkya and Nārada, a girl is given in marriage only once.[4] Manu says that a widow should not think of remarriage.[5] Medhātithi vehemently condemns it.[6] It is also opposed by the Ādi Purāṇa and Mādhava. They suggest that widow-remarriage should not be performed in the Kali age.[7] Laghu Āśvalāyana is of opinion that widow-remarriage should not be practised in the present age.[8] All agree with Manu, who recommends, 'Nowhere is a second husband permitted to a respectable woman.'[9] The rules in this regard were so strict that even child widows, whose marriages were not consummated and had been permitted earlier to remarry,[1] were not allowed to marry again. In this connection the Jagāḍucarita informs us that Jagāḍu failed to persuade those who were against the remarriage of his young daugher and eventually he dropped the idea of her remarriage.[2] No doubt the attitude of the society so hardened that the previous liberal views were now not acceptable. Devanbhaṭṭa confirms that the texts in favour of remarriage have got no application to the present age.[3] Hemacandra also disapproves this custom.[4] Siddharṣi Sūri mentions young widows living with wives of people who were away in other parts of the country.[5] Rājśekhara also mentions the word 'bālavidhavā'.[6] It is thus clear that even a child widow had to keep celibacy for the rest of her life, which according to Al-Biruni, was full of miseries. It resulted in raising the number of widows performing Satī, as has been noticed by Muslim writers. They had no alternative but to burn themselves on the funeral pyres of their husbands.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 101. Cf. *Mbh.*, V.21, XIII.12.19; I.132.63-64.

[2] *Mbh*, XIII.44.52.

[3] *Manu.*, IX.66.68.

[4] On *Manu*, IV 176; IX.64-65.

[5] *Āp.Dh.S*, II.6 13.7-9, II.10.27.2.7; *Bṛhaspati* quoted in *Smṛti Candrikā*, I.10, Cf. *Smṛti Muktāphala*, p. 130.

[6] *Asahāya*, I.39.

[7] Altekar. *Position of Women*, p. 148.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, 155. Marcopolo writes that 'the queen of Mutfili (Telangana), after the death of her husband never married again.' Yule : *Marcopolo*, p. 360.

[2] *Chachanama*, pp. 23, 34, 54: Cf. Elliot, I, pp. 140, 148. But these marriages took place because of political considerations. The *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, which speaks a lot on the low morality of women, has not recorded a single instance of widow-remarriage. The *Kathāsaritsāgara*, however, gives some instances of widow remarriage. (XVIII.259-289, XVIII.321-344, LXV.178-95, XCVIII.47-50). This is corroborated by Marcopolo as a custom prevailing throughout India (Yule, Vol. II, p. 376). But it seems that Marcopolo writes about the low castes of South India, in whom as in other parts of India, widow remarriage was and still is permissible (cf. Nelson : *Madrua*. Pt. II, p. 51). While higher-caste widows were not allowed to remarry, it seems that among the Śūdras widow-marriage was a common practice (Commentary on *Haribhadra*'s *Dharma-bindu*. p. 185).

[3] *Āp. Dh.S.*, II.6.12. 3-4.

[4] *Manu.*, IX 47; *Yāj.*, I.52; *Nārada*, XII.12. Few authorities permit a woman to be married for a second time if her husband disappears, dies, becomes an ascetic, is impotent or loses caste. *Nārada.*, XII.97; *Parāśara*, IV.30; *Agni-Purāṇa* CLIV.51. cf. *Śukra*, III 21, *Vasi*, XVII. 67-71.

[5] *Manu.*, V.157.

[6] On *Manu.*, V.163.

[7] Altekar : *op. cit.*, p. 155.

[8] *Laghu Āśvalāyana*, XXI.14.

[9] *Manu.*, V. 162.

Divorce Not Permitted

To the Hindus, marriage was a life-long union which could only be broken by death. The union of husband and wife was completed by Homa and Saptapadī. It was considered indissoluble from both social and religious points of view. Manu provides for the continuation of mutual fidelity till death and considers it as "the summary of the highest Dharma of man and wife."[1] This is amply borne out by the statement of Al-Biruni, who informs us that "husband and wife can only be separated by death, as they have no divorce."[2] Al-Biruni's statement is confirmed by the observation of Hsuan Tsang, who remarks that "a woman never contracts a second marriage."[3] Manu's injunction is, "Neither by sale nor by repudiation is a wife released from her husband; such we know the law to be which the Lord of Creatures (Prajāpati) made of old."[4] It means that 'a wife sold or repudiated by her husband, can never become the legitimate wife of another who may have bought or received her after she was repudiated." [5]

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[1] *Baudh.*, II.2.4.7; **Mbh.**, XIV. 55.7; *Manu.*, V.163. *Nārada*, XII.98-101; *Laghuśatātapa Smṛti*, 44. *Vasiṣṭha*. XVII.66. *Aparārka*, p. 97. In this connection we can mention the births of Vastupāla and Tejahpāla, the high ministers of Dholaka chief Vīradhavala. They were sons of young widow Kumāradevi whom Āśārāja had remarried (*Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, Eng. Tr. Tawney, pp. 155-56; *Nāgari Pracāriṇī Patrikā*, Vol. IV, Pt. I, *New Ed.*, p. 38; *ABOR*, IX, p. 174 f.n.). Some instances of widow remarriage are mentioned in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (**XVIII.** 254-289, XVIII. 321-344; LXV. 178-195.

[2] *Jagāḍucarita*, III. 23-27.

[3] *Smṛticandrikā*, p. 221. Though the Smṛtisāra (c. 1150-1200 A.D.) mentions several views in favour of widow remarriage (p. 12), it seems that the idea was not favoured.

[4] *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, Eng. Tr., pp. 155-156.

[5] *Upamiti*, pp. 572-73.

[6] *Karpūramañjarī*, III, p. 75.

The writers on Dharmśāstras unanimously hold the view that marriage is a very important Saṁskāra by which a girl acquires wifehood. Without having married they could not hope to reach heaven after death.[6] Sometimes, if an unmarried girl died, she was cremated after some sort of marriage rites was performed.[7] When a child-widow was not permitted to remarry, the question of divorce did not arise in ancient India. There were, however, some provisions under which husband and wife could divorce each other.[8] This facility was seldom availed by women because of rigid social customs and practices.

Polygamy : Commonly Practised

Though monogamy was generally practised, polygamy was not unknown. We are told by Al-Biruni that some Hindus thought that the number of wives depended upon the caste;

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1. *Manu* , IX 101.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p 154.
3. Watters II, p. 81.
4. *Manu*, IX, 46.
5. On *Manu*, Medhātithi, IX 46.
6. *Mbh* , *Śalya Parva*, Ch. 52.
7 *Vaikhānasa Smārtasūtra*, v 9.
8. Kane : *HDS*, II, pp. 620 ff.

accordingly a Brāhmaṇa might take four, a Kṣatriya three, a Vaiśya two wives and a Śūdra one.[1] He further tells us that "a man may marry one to four wives. He is not allowed to take more than four, but if one of his wives dies he may take another one to complete the legitimate number. However, he must not go beyond it."[2]

As regards Al-Biruni's statement on polygamy, we may point out that according to the provisions of the Dharmaśāstras, the number of wives one could take varied from caste to caste. Manu says that a Brāhmaṇa can have four, a Kṣatriya three, a Vaiśya two wives at a time and Śūdra only one.[3] Devala also provides that while a Śūdra may have only one wife, a Vaiśya two, a Kṣatriya three and a Brāhmaṇa four, but a king may have as many as he desires.[4] The Mahābhārata also holds that to have many wives is not a dharma for a man.[5] According to Sulayman, the people of China and Hind were not monogamists; they married as many women[6] as they liked. Marvazi informs us that the chiefs of B.Rahun (Vārāṇasī ?) married twenty to hundred women.[7] The Chachanama also mentions that Dahar had more than one wife.[8] It is also testified by Marcopolo, who speaks of "the 500 wives of the king of Mabar" and 'the 300 wives' of the king of Cail. Both these territories formed parts of the Pāṇḍya kingdom.[9] Thus the rule of four wives did not apply to the kings. Most of the kings of the period under study had several wives. For example, we are informed that the Kalacuri king Gāṅgeyadeva had obtained Mukti at Prayāga with his hundred wives.[10] Govindacandra of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty had married five women.[1] Pṛthvīrāja had eight queens.[2] According to the Gwalior inscription Alla had married five women.[3] The Rājataraṅgiṇī mentions the polygamous nature of the kings. They maintained seraglio 'full of queens and concubines' to satisfy their political ambitions as well as their bodily desires. King Kalaśa had seventy-two ladies in his seraglio.[4] Harṣa was surrounded with three hundred sixty ladies of his harem.[5] The Lohari inscription records that Jalasala had as many as nine wives.[6] Polygamy was thus rooted in the ruling section of the society, but the commoners must have found it beyond their means. For the rich section of society it was a luxury and provided proof of its wealth and influence.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 155. Cf. *Manu*, III.13.
[2] Ibid, p. 154.
[3] *Manu*, III.13.
[4] *Devala* quoted in *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 85.
[5] *Mbh.*, *Ādi Parva*, 160.36.
[6] Sulayman, p. 34; Nainar, p.103.
[7] Marvazi, p. 52 (67).
[8] *Chachnama*, p. 164; Elliot , I, p. 181.
[9] Yule : *Marcopolo*, II, pp. 339, 371.
[10] *EI*, II, p. 4; XII, p. 205.

The practice of polygamy generally was not favoured. Ancient law-givers provide that the second marriage should be contracted only when there was either no issue or there were only female issues from the first marriage. According to Āpastamba, a man can marry another woman when in the first wife progeny and Dharma are wanting.[7] Manu and Yājñavalkya recommend that a wife can be superseded by another wife if she is unable to procure a son or she is in a bad habit of drinking, speaking harsh words, suffering from a disease and giving birth only to female children.[8]

Among several wives only the wife of one's own caste was considered the Dharmapatni, the rest enjoyed a lower status[9] and their children were also put at a disadvantage in the law of inheritance.[10] A man could not take a second wife if his first wife was of good character and had male issues.[1] The polygamists suffered from a disability as they could not be testified in law courts[2] Indeed, monogamy was considered an ideal for men.[3]

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[1] Ibid. V, p. 116, 118, IV, p. 107-109, II, p. 319; IX, p. 321; *JASB*, IV, p. 115.

[2] *Pṛthvīrājarāso*, pp. 238, 382.

[3] *EI*, I, p. 156.

[4] *Rāj.*, VII.520-21.

[5] Ibid, VII.963-964.

[6] *Rajaputana Museum Report*, 1923, pp. 2-3.

[7] *Ap.Dh.S.*, II.5.11.12-13.

[8] *Manu.*, V. 80; *Yaj.* I.80.

[9] *Ap.Dh.S.*, II.5.11-12; *Aparārka*, p. 140.

[10] Jolly : *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 141. cf. *Manu.*, V.81; *Baud. Dh. S.*, II.2.65.

Polyandry was Unknown

The early Muslim writers do not speak of polyandry. In fact, it was absolutely unknown to the Hindus. Only Al-Biruni refers to this custom in connection with the Pāṇḍavas and their common wife Draupadī, but he frankly admits that this custom had been abolished.[4] The custom of polyandry even among the Vedic people was not in vogue. In this connection the Taittirīya Saṁhitā says, "In that one post he twins round two girdles, therefore, one man wins two wives; in that he does not wind one girdle round two posts, therefore, one wife does not find two husbands."[5] This suggests that a man could marry as many wives as he desired, but a woman had no such problem. When widow remarriage was out of practice, one could hardly expect the prevalence of polyandry,

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1. *Āp.Dh.S.*, II.5.11 f.
2. *Nārada.*, I 90.
3. *Kāvyamīmānsā*, p. 54.
4. Al-Biruni, I.108. Al-Biruni also notices the practice of Polyandry among some of the tribes of Tibet. He writes, "As regards unnatural kinds of marriage, we must state that such exist still in our time, as they also existed in the times of Arab heathendon; for the people inhabiting the mountains stretching from the region of Panchir into the neighbourhood of Kashmir live under the rule that several brothers have one wife in common" (Al-Biruni, I, p. 108). "Polyandry was quite unknown except perhaps among some aboriginal hill tribes. It is to some extent still practised among some of aboriginal tribes of the neighbouring regions of Kashmir." (*Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. VIII, p. 453). "It appears that Śataśṛng (From Lahul Spiti to Jaunsar Bawar), where Pandu lived for a long time may have been the same region of the Himalayas where polyandry is still practised and sexual relations are rather free. Polyandry among brothers to keep family property and unity intact is still practised in Kinnaur and Jaunsar Bawar areas" (*Status of Women in the Epics*, S. Jayal, p. 315); cf. *JRAS*, 1897, p. 758; R.N. Saksena : *Social Economy of Polyandrous People'*, Ch. II and III.
5. *Taitt. Sam.*, VI.4.6.3; cf. *Ait.,Br.* III.23; *Gop. Br. Uttarabhāga.*, III.20.

which was generally looked upon with contempt and abhorrence.[1] In this respect the people honoured the following injunction of the Mahābhārata, 'It was ordained that a husband can have many wives but we have never heard that a wife can have many husbands.'"[2]

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[1] Nīlakaṇṭha, commenting on the question of Draupadī and her five husbands, refers to the practice among very low-castes in his day of one woman having two or three husbands (*on Ādiparva*, 104.35). In the Kumaun region of the Himalayas, the Brāhmaṇas, Rajputs and Śūdras all practised polyandry and the children were attributed to the eldest brother who was alive (*IA*, Vol. VIII, p. 188). For details see Kane : *HDS*, II, pp. 554-556; Dr. Altekar : *Position of Women*, pp. 112-114, and for various references of the *Mahābhārat*, Jayal : *Stutus of Women in the Epics*.

[2] *Mbh., Ādi Parva.* 177-27-28.

CHAPTER IV

THE POSITION OF WOMEN

High Position of Women

In early times women in India enjoyed an honourable position in society. Manu assigns her the status of the presiding deity in the house and tells us that "where women are honoured, there the gods are pleased; but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite yields rewards. Where the female relations live in grief, the family soon wholly perishes; the family, where they are not unhappy, ever prospers."[1] The Mahābhārata and the Yājñavalkya Smṛti also use Similar expression about women.[2] They enjoyed great privileges and were regarded as "pivots of the entire social organism." Varāhamihira praises them in the following words: "Nowhere the creator designed any gem other than women, for this gem gives delight to men, when heard of, seen, touched, or even remembered; for its sake are done righteous deeds and wealth accumulated; from that do men derive worldly pleasures and offsprings. Such damsels are the goddesses of fortune. Hence they should always be honoured at home with respect and wealth."[3] But with the passage of time their status underwent a change, their rights and privileges decreased. Many epithets, not flattering to women, came to be used. They have been called wicked and jealous, possessing weak moral character.[4] Among the Buddhists they were looked upon as the destruction of all the destructions in this world and the next.[5] In the Jain Kathā Upamitibhavaprapañca many cynical remarks are used against women. They are said to be 'as fickle as the wind, deceitful in their ways

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1. *Manu.*, III.56-57.
2. *Mbh.*, *Anuśāsanaparve*, XVI.5; *Yāj.*, I.71.
3. *Bṛhata-saṁhitā*, *Strīpraśaṁsādhāya*, Ch. 74, . vv 4-6, 15.
4. *Prabodhacandrodaya*, pp. 43, 46.
5. *Śikṣasamuccaya* (Eng. Tr.), p. 77.

and an impediment in the road to spiritual progress.[1] Bhartṛhari also took them as an obstacle in one's way to reach the door of heaven.[2] Thus there was a gradual deterioration in their position, rights and privileges. They came to be looked down in society. They were wedded for 'fame, wealth and offspring.'[3]

Birth of Girl Unpopular

The birth of a girl was generally considered an unwelcome event in society in ancient times. Al-Biruni says that when a child is born people show particular attention to the man, not the woman.[4] We find the same attitude in the Brāhmaṇa literature. The arrival of a female child was not so welcome as that of the son. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa observes that while the son is the hope of the family the daughter is the source of trouble to it.[5] The Mahābhārata also holds a similar view regarding the birth of a famale child.[6] In the Kathāsaritsāgara also we find that the son is the bliss itself and the daughter is the root of misery.[7] Under these circumstances Al-Biruni's remark is quite correct that people showed more respect to men than the women at the time of the birth of a male child. This preferential attitude between the male and female child may be attributed to the fact that the former ever remained with his parents and supported them in their old age. The marriage of girls also partly explains preferential treatment. According to some writers the poignant pain felt by the parents at the time of their separation from their daughter after marriage, was partly responsible for it.[8] It is also possible that the merriage of a girl in-

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1. *Upamitibhavaprapañca*, pp. 331, 643.
2. *Śṛṅgāraśataka*, v. 45.
3. *SMK*, p. 85.
4. Al-Biruni, I, p. 181. In the *Chachnama* the importance of the son is described. *Chachnama*, p. 43; Elliot, I, p. 156.
5. *Ait.Br.*, VII.18.
6. *Mbh.*, I.173.10; XII.243.20.
7. KSS, XXVIII.6.
8. Altekar : *Position of Women*, p. 6.

volved worries[1] and the honour of the family was likely to be 'tainted if she went astray'. So the birth of a daughter was looked upon as a curse upon the family. To save themselves from worries and dishonour, some people resorted to the evil practice of female infanticide. The British prohibited girl-slaughter in India by law in the nineteenth century.

Female Education

Nonetheless, it is true that the girls were not altogether deprived of parental affection and love. Once a female child was born, it became the duty of the parents to bring her up and educate her properly, though the scope of her education was limited. Child marriage restricted the proper education of women. According to Hārīta, education be imparted to them on condition that they are taught not by an outsider, but by their own parents or brother.[2] Muslim writers mention the girls dedicated to temples as Devadāsīs or who took up the profession of prostitutes. Such women were proficient in dancing and singing.[3] Girls of royal families were undoubtedly imparted military and administrative education. In the Chachnama we are informed that Bai, the sister and queen of Dahar, vigorously fought against Kasim after the death of Dahar, and when there was no chance of success she burnt herself to death.[4] Dahar's niece was so wise that many women used to consult her and take her advice and they learnt many things from her.[5] In this connection we may mention the names of queens who governed their respective kingdoms after the death of kings. Sugandhā and Diddā of Kashmir,[6] Karpūradevī, the mother of Pṛthvīrāja III,[7] Somaladevī of Rajputānā, and the Gāhaḍavāla queen of Jaya-

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1. Cf. *Harṣacarita* (M.S. Ed.), p. 141; *Upamiti*, pp. 331. 643.
2. *Hārīta*, quoted in *Status of Women by Indra*, p. 172.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 157; Sulayman, p. 88; Maqdasi, p. 483; Elliot, I, p. 98 etc.
4. *Chachnama*, p. 153.
5. Ibid, 152.
6. *Rāj.*; VI.332, VII.103.
7. *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya*, IX.3-35.

candra[1]—all took part in the administration of the states. One may reasonably suppose that they had received proper education.

The Wife and Mother

In childhood the girl was nursed with tender care and love of her parents. When she reached the age of marriage, she was married with every consideration regarding matrimonial alliance. At the time of her marriage she was decorated with valuable ornaments and clothes and gifts were presented to her by the parents according to their status. After leaving the parents' house she made the house of her husband as her permanent house. Now began the second stage of her life. It was a lifelong union; only death could separate her from her husband.[2] The husband was everything to her. He was her god. She lived for the pleasure and happiness of her husband. She was faithful to him and had to maintain the high ideal of chastity.[3] It was due to this that if she lost her husband she had to follow the funeral pyre of her husband and become a Sati.[4] Muslim writers have recorded the practice of Sati as a custom generally observed by Indian women. In case she failed to do so, she was ill-treated as long as she lived. If she was not faithful to her husband and was of loose character, she could even be driven out by her husband.[5] Thus it was required of her that as a wife she would be faithful and chaste. As partner of her husband she co-operated with him in the performance of rites concerning Garbhādhāna for procuring child.[6] After the birth of child many other rites were performed. In the marriage of children she helped her husband.[7] In matters concerning household she was the mistress of her home and the friend, partner and adviser of her husband.

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1. Niyogi : *History of the Gāhaḍavālas*, p. 228.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
3. *Manu.*, p. 154-155; *Sāraṅgadharapaddhati*, v. 605.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
5. Ibid, p. 162.
6. Ibid, II, p. 156.
7. Ibid, II, p. 154.

Referring to this, Al-Biruni remarks that men took the advice of women in all consultations and emergencies.[1] Only with the help and co-operation of her could Dharma, Artha and Kāma be obtained and enjoyed.[2] According to the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa she was the original source of gṛhastha and happiness.[3] As a wife she could not be divorced, remarks Al-Biruni.[4] If after the death of her husband she did not burn herself with her dead husband, she had to live under the care of her sons and had to lead a life of celibacy.[5] As a mother, her status was undoubtedly very high and she was an object of reverence in the family. She could not commit anything unworthy of her husband.[6] Being a wife and mother she suffered from certain disadvantages too. She had to suffer on account of the presence of co-wives of her husband. During this period of our study polygamy was often practised and men were allowed to have more than one wife according to their caste or status in the society.[7] Under these circumstances she could be superseded if she could not bear a male-living child.[8] After the death of her husband if she did not follow the funeral pyre of her husband she could be ill-treated and had to live under the control of her sons. She had no right in the property of her husband.[9] If she was a co-wife, her children had no equal rights as sons of the wedded wife.[10] Sometimes she had to live under the supervision of her brother.[11]

The Widow : A Cursed Life

The worst part of her life was widowhood. It was the greatest calamity that could befall a woman, says the Rāmāyaṇa.[1] In this connection Al-Biruni remarks, "If a wife loses her husband by death, she cannot marry another man. She has only to choose between two things—either to remain a widow as long as she lives or to burn herself, and the latter eventuallty is considered the preferable, because as a widow she is ill-treated as long as she lives. As regards the wives of the kings, they are in the habit of burning them, whether they wish it or not, by which they desire to prevent any of them by chance committing something unworthy of the illustrious husband. They make an exception only for women of advanced years and for those who have children; for the son is the responsible protector of his mother."[2] As regards widow remarriage, it has already been pointed out that it was not generally possible; even child-widows were not allowed to remarry.[3] In the higher classes and ruling families they often burnt themselves alongwith the dead bodies of their husbands.[4] Those who survived remained in their houses under strict control of their sons. They were not allowed to wear coloured clothes and put ornaments. It was a life of complete austerity.[5] Her very sight was regarded as most inauspicious.[6] In this connection the Mahābhārata remarks that a widow is pounced on all sides by the wicked like a piece of flesh by the birds of prey.[7] Dr. Altekar draws a very pitiable picture of her life, "The widow did not receive much intelligent sympathy from society as a whole. If she continued to live in the family of her husband, she had to work as a drudge; if she lived separately, she was given a pittance as her maintenance. She had to spend her life with her head shaven and arms bared; she was an outcaste on festive occasions—a bad omen...."[8] 'However, it was not always

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.

[2] *Dakṣa Smṛti*, Ch. IV (SS, p. 79).

[3] *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Ch. XXI. vv. 68-71.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid. Ibn Battuta also mentions virtuous women of Hinawr (Ibn Battuta, p. 230).

[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.

[8] On *Manu* (*Medhātithi*), IX.81; See pp. 112-114.

[9] Al-Biruni, II, p. 154 and 164.

[10] *Upamiti*, p 332; *Purātanaprabandhasangrah*, p. 89.

[11] *EI*, IX, pp. 12-15.

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1. *Rāmāyaṇa*, VII.45.43.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.
3. See pp. 108-110.
4. See pp. 122-126. under *Satī*.
5. *Harṣacarita*, V, p. 172; *Kādambarī*, p. 42.
6. *Skandapurāṇa* III.7.51.
7. *Mbh.*, I 158.10 ; Cf. *Manu.*, V 157-162 for the duties of a widow.
8. Altekar : op.cit., p. 164.

necessary that they should burn themselves. We have references to widows who survived. Diddā, for instance, managed the affairs of state after the death of her husband.[1] Karpūradevī, mother of Pṛthvīrāja III, has been praised for the good administration of state during the minority of her son.[2] Some Smṛti-writers allow them to lead an ascetic life instead of self-immolation,[3] which was an alternative, but it seems that it was not possible for them to live after the death of their husband. They burnt themselves whether they wished it or not. Angirasa says that the only course which religion has prescribed for a widow is that of Satī.[4] One may conclude that the injunction of the law-givers was generally followed.

Sati : A Popular Custom

Let us now consider the practice of Satī (Sahamaraṇa or Anumaraṇa). The system had been prevalent since early times in India. Muslim writers are unanimously of the view that it was optional and never compulsory. Secondly it was mostly prevalent in the ruling families. For instance, Sulayman remarks that generally the wives of kings burnt themselves with their husbands, but there was no compulsion and if they so desired they might not burn themselves.[5] Masudi also writes, "Like the people of Sicily and other countries the custom of burning of the ladies was prevalent among the Hindus also. In those countries when a man dies his wife, though alive, was burnt with him but on the death of a woman, the husband was not burnt. Women there very eagerly wished to die because they thaught by such an act they would enter heaven with their husbands. The same was the custom with the Hindus. They became Satī, but it was not compulsory to burn, if the wife so desired she could become Satī."[1] Al-Baladhuri also mentions that the queen of Dahar burned herself and her attendants and all her possessions, lest she would be captured by the Muslims.[2] But the prevalent practice of Satī is described by Al-Biruni. According to him, there were two alternatives before Hindu widows, either they ended their lives by burning themselves, or if they wanted to live they had to lead a life of widowhood, full of misery, and they preferred the first. The wives of kings were in the habit of burning themselves whether they wished it or not. There was an exception in the case of those who had children or were of advanced age.[3] The observations of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuṭa confirm the statements of Muslim writers. Morco Polo says that women burnt themselves with the bodies of their husbands, for which they were highly praised by all.[4] Ibn Battuta writes that before burning a widow was well dressed; riding on horse back she was followed by men and preceded by drums and trumpets. "The burning of the wife after her husband's death is regarded by them as a commendable act, but, is not compulsory, only when a widow burns herself her family acquires a certain prestige by it and gains a reputation for fidelity. A widow who does not burn herself dresses in misery, despised for her lack of fidelity, but she is not forced to burn herself."[5] 'Al-Biruni also observes that they preferred death to widowhood because there were chances of committing something unworthy of their illustrious husbands.[6] Evidently the Smṛti writers praised Satī for women and recommended that a women dying on the funeral pyre of her husband would

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[1] *Rāj.*, V.226–7, VI.197.

[2] *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya*, IX.3-35. Marco Polo mentions that the widow queen of Mutfili (Telangana) administered the kingdom for forty long years with success and was loved by her people for her justice. (Yule : *Marco Polo*, II, p. 360.)

[3] *Bṛhaspati*, XXV.11; *Parāśara*, IV.31; *Agnipurāṇa*, 221 23.

[4] Quoted by *Aparārka on Yāj.*, I.87.

[5] Elliot, I, p. 11; Nainar, pp. 106-107; Sulayman, p. 50.

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1. Masudi, IV, p. 9 (Tr. by Chaube, *India as told by the Muslims*, pp, 233-34).
2. Baladhuri, p. 221.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155; Cf. *Bṛhaspati*, XXV.11; *Viṣṇu Dh.S.* mentions *Satī*, "On the death of her husband a woman should either observe chastity or ascend his funeral pyre." (XXV.14).
4. Yule: *Marco Polo*, II, P. 341.
5. Ibn Battuta, 191 ff.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 155.

enjoy eternal bliss in heaven.[1] Self-Immolation was the only meritorious course which could be followed by a virtuous widow.[2] It was also emphasised on the ground that by practising Satī a woman would re-unite with her husband after death.[3] The widows who followed the funeral pyres of their husbands are highly spoken of in Indian literature.[4] Sulayman and Al-Biruni mention that the practice was more common in the royal families. We have references to the ladies of royal families generally practising Satī. Yaśomatī decided to burn herself, thinking that it was the only course to be adopted by every lady of high family. Similar view was expressed by Rājyaśrī, the sister of Harṣavardhana.[5] Samyogitā and other wives of Pṛthvīrāja III, burnt themselves on the funeral pyre, when they received the news of the death of their husband.[6] Kalhaṇa makes mention of many queens who burnt themselves along with others (concubines and servants, etc.) with the dead kings.[7] Many inscriptions of different dynasties record that this practice was very common among the royal families as stated by Muslim writers.[8] Baladhuri writes that the queen of Dahar burnt herself along with others, including her all possessions.[9] It is clear from the foregoing that Satī was most popular among the warrior classes of India. Women followed the advice of the Dharmaśāstras without any hesitation and gladly accompanied the dead bodies of their husbands on their funeral pyres.

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1. *Dakṣa.*; IV, 18-19 (*SS*, p. 30)
2. *Aṅgirasa,* quoted in *Aparārka's commentary on Yāj.* I.87.
3. Lakṣmidhara prescribes duties for a widow and quotes in his *Kṛt. Vyāsa, Viṣṇu, Bṛhaspati* and *Brahma Purāṇa* (*Vyavahārakāṇḍa,* pp. 622-634) in this connection and praises the Satī. By practising Satī she would live in heaven with her husband for uncountable years. (*Vyava.*, p. 622.)
4. *Kumārasaṁbhava,* IV.18; *Gāthāsaptaśatī,* VII.33; *Kāmasūtra,* VI.3.43; *Bṛhatsaṁhitā,* 74.33.
5. *Harṣacarita,* V, pp. 167-168, VIII, p, 253.
6. *Pṛthvīrāja Rāso, Samaya,* LXVI.
7. *Rāj.*, V.226, VII.103; 477-479, 724, 1380, 1486, 858, VIII.368, 445-6, 2334.
8. *EI,* XX, pp. 58, 168; II, p. 4; Sharma : *Early Chauhan Dynasties,* p 258; Kane : *HDS,* II.629.
9. Baladhuri, p. 221.

The question is : was the prectice confined to the royal families only ? As far as literary and epigraphical references and the Smṛti literature[1] are concerned, they seem to limit the practice of Satī to Kṣatriya women.[2] As regards Brāhmaṇa women, it was generally prohibited for them. Aṅgiras, for instance, says that if a Brāhmaṇa widow becomes Satī her death amounts to suicide. Neither she nor her husband will reach heaven.[3] Vyāsa Smṛti recommends that a Brāhmaṇa widow should adopt two courses, either to be a Satī or lead an ascetic life.[4] The Padma Purāṇa expressly prohibits Satī for them.[5] Dr. Altekar is of opinion that few Brāhmaṇa families followed the practice after A.D. 1000. He thinks that Satī was originally a Kṣatriya custom.[6]

Though some Smṛti writers do not, however, hold it as an ideal for the widow, they allow it only as a second alternative and regard ascetic life as preferable to it. Such is the case with Bṛhaspati,[7] Parāśara[8] and the author of Agnipurāṇa.[9] Śukra also advises that a chaste widow should either accompany her husband (to be a Satī) or observe the vow of chastity.[10] Medhātithi was of opinion that one should not die before the span of life is run out.[11] But this was not possible in the time of Al-Biruni who says that death by Satī and life long widowhood full of misery were the two alternatives before the Hindu widows of kings, who burnt themselves whether they wished it or not. There are some historical evidences to show that all the queens did not follow the practice of Satī after the death of kings. Sugandhā and Diddā carried on the administration of state by remaining alive after the death of their husbands.[1] Karpūradevī acted as regent of her minor son Pṛthvīrāja III, after the death of her husband.[2]

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[1] *Parāśara*, IV.30-31; *Viṣṇu*. XXV.14; *Dakṣa.*, IV.18; *Vāysa.*, II.53 (*SS*, p. 362).

[2] *KSS*, X.58; Rāj. VI.107, 195; VII.103, 478.

[3] Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 627 f.n. 1468.

[4] *Vyāsa*.II. 53 (*SS*, p. 362).

[5] *Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa*, 49.72-73.

[6] Altekar : *Position of Women*, pp. 128-29. It declares that any person, who will be guilty of helping a Brāhmaṇa widow to the funeral pyre, will be guilty of the dreadful and unatonable sin of the murder of a Brāhmaṇa (Brahmahatyā).

[7] *Bṛhaspati.*, XXV.11.

[8] *Parāśara*, IV.30-31.

[9] *Agnipurāṇa*, 221-23.

[10] *Śukra* (Eng. Tr.), p. 163.

[11] *On Manu*, V.156.

Purda : Not a Common Custom

Another system which seems to have been observed in Hindu society was Purda, but not in the manner as we find it today. Generally it was unknown to ancient India. Al-Biruni and other Muslim writers make no mention of it. We have no reference to it in Samskṛita dramas. Hsuan Tsang also does not mention it. He says that Rājyaśrī, the widowed sister of Harṣa, attended her brother's court without any Purda.[3] Even in the Rājataraṅgiṇī we do not get any reference to it. From the Chachnama we learn that Rani Bai, the queen of Dahar, after his death collected some of his generals and prepared for fight against Kasim.[4] It is said that Maiki Devi fought the Muslims.[5] Sometimes the queens took part in the states' administration with success.[6] They conferred with the ministers and other officials. Thus it appears that Purda was not observed in the form in which it has been done till recently in modern India. In this connection the observation of Abu Zayd may be cited. He remarks that "most of the princes of India when they hold a court allow their women to be seen by the men who attend it, whether they be relatives or foreigners. No veil conceals them from the eyes

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1. *Rāj*, V.226-27, VI.197.
2. *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya*, IX.3-35,
3. Beal : *Life of Yuan Chwang*, p. 176.
4. Elliot, I, pp. 153-54.
5. A.K. Majumdar : *The Cālukyas of Gujrat*, pp. 131-136; *Vīsaldeva Raso*, II.66.
6. *Rāj*, VI. 332 ff; *Pṛthvīrāja Vijaya*, IV.3-35; Niyogi : *History of the Gāhaḍavālalas*, p. 228. Queen Raddadevi openly accepted the homage of the vassals when she was at Lohara to crown her son. (*Rāj.*, VIII. 33.3).

of visitors.'"[1] On the basis of the Kadba plates, Dr. Altekar thinks that the observation of Abu Zayd is correct and no Purda was observed in the Deccan during the early medieval period. The above inscription records that the moonfaced damsels in the court of Kṛṣṇa I, used to give delight to the ladies of the capitals. But it seems that condition in north India was different.[2] The Chachnama says that outsiders were not allowed to visit the inner apartments of the royal palaces. If some guests were allowed, they treated the royal ladies like mothers and sisters. They generally never looked upon any woman who was a stranger to them.[3] Aparārka quotes Śaṁkha Smṛti which says that women were not allowed to speak with unknown persons.[4] We are also informed that women of Rajasthana could not even look at the sun, regarding him as a Parapuruṣa. Dr. Dasharath Sharma is of opinion that the custom was probabiy confined to the Rajput clans and that too was not universal.[5] However, to maintain the dignity of the royal palaces entrances and exits were regulated and carefully guarded by trustworthy persons appointed by the state.[6] It seems that women observed some kind of privacy from men other than the members of their own family.[7] Their social freedom of movement and mixing with other people was restricted and in this regard they had to observe some kind of code of conduct. Accordingly, "if she

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1. Elliot, I, p. 11.
2. Altekar : *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas* and *Their Times*, P. 343; Cf. *Position of Women*, p. 175.
3. *Chachanama*, p. 182. It is also mentioned that when a stranger was allowed to visit the private apartment of the king, the queens were asked to go behind the curtain. (ibid, p. 16.).
4. On *Yāj*. I.83.
5. Sharma : *The Early Chauhan Dynesties*, p. 259. Cf. 'A Kulavadhu is invisible even to the Sun' (*Śānkhya Tattva Kaumudī* of Vācaspati Miśra, p. 73.)
6. According to *Bāṇa* mukha varaṇam was 'worthy of the conduct of noble women.' (*Harṣacarita*, III, p. 98); Cf. *Kādambarī*, pp. 166, 302.
7. Cf. *Śukra*. III. 282-3.
8. R.B. Singh . *History* of the *Chahamanas* , p. 350. The existance of the Purda system in Rajasthana is proved by the *Śiśupāla Vadha* of Māgha. The servants were awarded punishment if they were found looking at the faces of the queens. (v. 7.17; XII.20).

ever needed to go outside, she had to put on garments properly. She was not to walk fast, nor was she allowed to speak with any one except a dealer, a recluse, an old man and a physician. While walking, she was not to laugh, not to talk, not to make any gesture. She was ever to be wakeful about the proper covering of her body and never to let any part of hers to be bare."[1] Śukra is also against her free movement, and does not allow her a moment's freedom.[2] According to him, an ideal woman should be confined to her home and be always engaged in domestic affairs from early morning till late evening.[3] It is thus clear that women observed some kind of Purda and were not allowed to be seen by outsiders at least in some sections of society, especially in the royal families. The attitude towards Purda is summed up in the story of Ratnaprabhā of the Kathāsaritsāgar. She says, "I consider that the strict seclusion of women is a folly produced by jealousy. It is of no use whatsoever. Women of good character are guarded only by their own virtue and nothing else."[4] Dr. Altekar is of opinion that the adoption of the Purda system by the ruling aristocratic families of the Hindu community is subsequent to the advent of the Muslim rule. "It was accepted by the Hindu society partly in imitation of the manners of the conquerors and partly as an additional protection for the women folk."[5]

The Period of Impurity

From very early times, Hindu society has regarded woman as extremely impure and temporarily untouchable during her monthly period. To quote Al-Biruni, "The longest duration of the menstrual courses which has been observed is sixteen days, but in reality they last only during the first four days, and then the husband is not allowed to cohabit with his wife, nor even to come near her in the house, because during this time she is impure. After the four days have elapsed and she has washed, she is pure again, and the husband may cohabit with her, even if the blood has not yet entirely disappeared; for this blood is not considered as that of the menstrual courses, but as the same substance-matter of which the embryos consist.''[1]

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[1] *Saṁkha Smṛti* as cited by Indra in the '*Status of Women in Ancient India*', pp. 87-88.

[2] *Śukra*, III.19

[3] Ibid, IV.345-356; *Vyāsa*, II.19-25.

[4] *KSS*, XXXVI.6-7.

[5] Altekar : *Op.cit.*, p. 175.

The observation of Al-Biruni is correct and is also supported by Sulayman who briefly mentions that unlike the Chinese the Indians do not touch their women when the custom is upon them but shun them, keeping them out of doors.[2] These observations are also confirmed by the provisions of the Dharmaśāstras. Almost all are of the view that the husband can cohabit with his wife from the fourth to the sixteenth nights after the monthly illness. The majority of the Gṛhya Sūtras and the Smṛtis consider the fourth night ceremoniously pure. Parāśara and others say that a woman is purified by taking bath on the fourth day of her menses.[3] Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra says that so far as the quality of offspring is concerned each succeeding even night from the fourth to the sixteenth after the menses is better than each preceding one.[4] The Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra allows twelve nights, including the sixteenth, as fit for conjugal union and say that a son is conceived on even nights, and a daughter on odd ones.[5] But Manu and Yājña-valkya lay down that the first four nights must be omitted.[6] The Taittirīya Saṁhitā says that 'one should not address a woman who has unclean clothes (i.e., who is in her courses) nor should one sit with her, one should not eat her food...[7] Baudhāyana Gṛhya Sūtra also states that a man should not

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.
2. Sulayman, p. 36; Nainar, p. 98.
3. *Parāśara*, VII.11-15; Cf. *Ap.* VII.20-20; *Atri.* 279-283; *Bṛhadyama*, III. 68-68.
4. Āp *Gṛ*. Sūtra, III.9.1; Cf. *Baudh. Gr.* S, I.7.45-46.
5. *Vaikh. Gṛ. S* , III.9; 42.11.
6. *Manu.*, III.48-48; *Yāj.*, I.79.
7. *Tait. Saṁh.*, II.5.1.7.

speak with a menstruous woman, nor should he sit together with her, nor should he eat the food touched by her, nor should he cohabit with her.[1] As regards Sulayman's observation, "Keeping out of doors' is strictly observed even in modern times in very orthodox Brāhmaṇa families, and the woman who is in her menses generally lives a life of complete seclusion during this period."[2]

During the time of child-birth a woman was required to observe the same rules regarding the monthly illness. At this time too she was treated as impure. According to Al-Biruni, "As long as the women is in the child-bed, she does not touch any vessel, and nothing is eaten in her house, nor does the Brāhmaṇa light there a fire. These days are eight for the Brāhmaṇa, twelve for the Kṣatriya, fifteen for the Vaiśya, and thirty for the Śūdra. For the low caste people which are not reckoned among any caste, no term is fixed."[3] On this point nothing can be said definitely because it depends on the time, place, etc. of birth. It can vary according to the caste of the parents of the newly born child. To C.V. Vaidya the observation of Al-Biruni appears strange.[4] While discussing the impurity on child birth, Al-Biruni also states that "the longest duration of sucking of the child is three years," but there is "no obligation in this matter," he adds.[5]

The Property Rights of Women

The position of women regardinng property rights improved considerably in the early medieval period. After considering the various views of the Smṛtis on the property right of women Dr. Ghoshal and Dr. R.C. Majumdar conclude that 'a distinct improvement of their status is observable in respect of their right of property.[6] In fact their right to property was recognised in India from the very beginning.

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[1] *Baudh. Gṛ.S.*, I.7.22-36.

[2] Cf Hopkin's : *The Ordinances of Manu*, Lect. IV, pp. 40-42.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 156-157.

[4] Vaidya : *HMHI*, III, p. 408.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 157.

[6] R.C. Majumdar (Ed.) : *The Struggle for Empire*, pp. 483-96.

In this connection G D. Banerjee observes, "nowhere were the property rights of women recognized so early as in India, and in very few ancient systems of laws where these rights been so largely conceded as in our own."[1] In the form of 'Strīdhan' women were entitled to the right of property given to them at the time of marriage by their parents, brothers or relatives. Writing on this subject Al-Biruni says, "The man gives only a present to the wife as he thinks fit, and a marriage gift in advance, which he has no right to claim back, but the wife may give it back to him on her own will."[2] Undoubtedly Al-Biruni speaks about the 'Strīdhana'. In what form this Strīdhana was given to women cannot be classified precisely. According to Manu it consisted of six varieties, including gifts from father, mother and brother, affectionate gifts by husband subsaquent to the marriage and presents given by others at the time of marriage or received at the bride-groom's house.[3] Manu condemns those who tried to deprive women of this kind of property after their husbands' death.[4] From the seventh century onward the scope of Strīdhan was enlarged. According to Devala, maintenance and accidental gains come under the scope of Strīdhana. Vijñāneśvara includes in the list of Strīdhana, "The property acquired by inheritance, purchase, partition, chance, and adverse possession."[5] According to Dr. Altekar, "It included every type of property in the possession of women, howsoever, it may have been acquired by her."[6] Al-Biruni's statement is very near to Manu's description of Strīdhana. Later Smṛti writers divided Strīdhana into two categories, Saudāyika and Asaudāyika. Gifts given by parents, husbands and other relations were included in the first category, and women had full control over it. The rest of Strīdhan came under the

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1. *Marriage and Stridhana*, p. 370.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p, 154.
3. *Manu.*, IX. 194.
4. Ibid, III.52.
5. *Devala* quoted by Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 221 f,n. 2. *on Yāj.*, II.143.
6. Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 222.

second category and the women could not alienate it, "but only enjoy its usufruct during their life time."[1]

Right of a Daughter

Al-Biruni begins his chapter on inheritance with the right of the daughter. "The chief rule of their law of inheritance is this, that the women do not inherit, except the daughter. She gets the fourth part of the share of a son according to a passage in the book of Manu. If she is not married the money is spent on her till the time of her marriage and her dowry is bought by means of her share. Aftarwards she has no more income from the house of her father."[2] The actual words of Manu are as follows, "But to the maiden (sister) the brothers shall severally give (portions) out of their shares, each out of his share one-fourth part, those who refuse to give (it) will become outcaste."[3] Yājñavalkya is also of opinion that an amount equal to one-fourth share from the property of the father should be spent by the brother on the marriage of his sister.[4] Dr. Altekar holds that since marriages had become obligatory for girls, it was but natural that a reasonable amount should be spent on the marriage of girls. "If a father died before his daughters had been wedded, the sons were bound to spend reasonable amounts for their suitable marriages out of the family estate."[5]

The Right of a Widow : Daughters Preferred

The remark of Al-Biruni that women did not inherit is partially correct, for we are told that a woman had no right over the property left by her husband. She could only claim the right of ornaments worn by her during her husband's life time.[6] No doubt the daughters were preferred to the widows, but we are informed by Jimūta-vāhan that the widow had

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1. Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 224.
2. Al-Biruni, II. p. 164.
3. *Manu*, IX.118.
4. *Yāj.*, II.124.
5. Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 242.
9. *Medh.* on *Manu*, IX.59.

the right to inherit the entire property of her husband in the absence of any male issue.[1] According to Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu and Kātyāyana the widow was considered the first heir of the sonless man.[2] The Lekhāpaddhati also records that a widow has right to enjoy the share equal to that of the son. Besides, the successors were obliged to bear the expenses equally in the marriage of an unmarried daughter.[3] Both Jīmūtavāhana and Vijñāneśvara hold that an unmarried daughter has more right to be a heir than her married sister in the property of her father.[4] It is therefore clear that the widow's right to the property of her husband was inferior to that of her daughter, especially the unmarried one. Gautama also prefers unmarried daughters (or unprovided for) than married daughters, who are well-placed.[5]

The Right of Maintenance of a Widow

From early times the right of the widow to be maintained by her husband's heirs has been recognised by the law-givers. In Al-Biruni's words, "If a widow does not burn herself, but prefers to remain alive, the heir of her deceased husband has to provide her with nourishment and clothing as long as she lives."[6] Al-Biruni's remarks are very near to the recommendations of the Dharmaśāstra writers. According to Nārada, "When the husband is dead, his kins become the guardians of his issuless widow. They have got full power in disposing of her and in the care of her as well as in her maintenance."[7] Nārada is decidedly following the code of Manu which recommends that the right of maintenance depends upon her living a life of chastity.[8] Early writers on

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[1] Majumdar (Ed.) : *History of Bengal*, I, p 610. Cf. Kane : *HDS*, III p. 701-712.

[2] *Viṣṇu.*, XVII.43; Yāj, II.135-136; *Mit. on Yāj.*, II.135-136.

[3] *Lekhāpaddhati*. 47.49; Cf. A.K. Majumdar : *Caulukyas of Gujrat*, pp. 334-336.

[4] *Dāyabhāga*. XI.2.4., *Yāj*. II.135.

[5] *Gautama*, XXVIII.62.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 164.

[7] *Nārada*, XIII.28-30.

[8] *Manu.*, IX.187.

Dharmaśāstra provide for a maintenance to the widow. Kautilya was of opinion that the state should maintain the widow after her husband's estate was resumed by the state.[1] Hārīta allows only maintenance to the widow.[2] It may therefore be concluded that bare necessities of life were provided to the widows by her husband's heirs.

Devadasi : The Temple Girls

Devadāsī is a very old institution formed mainly by dancing girls. They were dedicated by their parents to the temples for gods' service, and were regarded as a part of the normal establishment of the temples. Abu Zayd remarks, "In the Indies they have public women called women of the idol, the origin of whose institution is such : when a woman has laid herself under a vow, that she may have children, if it happens that she brings forth a handsome daughter, she carries the child to the God, so they call the Idol they worship and they leave her. When the girl has attained a proper age, she takes an apartment in this public place and spreads a curtain before her door and awaits the arrival of strangers as well as men of other sects, to whom this debauchery is made lawful. She prostitutes herself at a certain rate and delivers her gains into the hands of the Idol's priest, to be by him disposed off for the use and support of the temple."[3] We may also refer to the remarks of Al-Biruni, "But for this, no Brahman or priest would suffer in their idol temples the women who sing, dance and play. The kings make them an attraction for their citeis, a bait of pleasure for their subject; for no other but financial reasons. By the revenue which they derive from the business both as fines and taxes, they want to recover the expenses which their treasury has to spend on the army."[4] The custom of dedicating dancing girls to the temples and

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1. *Kautilya*, III.5.
2. *Hārīta*, IV.9.
3 Abu Zayd (the Suppliment), p. 88; Nainar, p. 117; Cf. Yule : Marco Polo, ¹I, p. 345; Nelson's Madura *Commentary*, Part II, p. 79.
4. Al-Biruni, I, p. 98.

supported by the kings is also noticed by other writers. The writer of Hudud-al-Alam mentions that 30 dancing girls were attached to a temple in Ramiyan, whose function was to go round about this idol (sizan-and ki gird-i but a yand) with drums, tambourines (daf), and dances (pay kuftan).''[1] We may further refer to Marvazi's statement which is quite informative. He says that the town of S.Labur had many idol temples and three markets of courtesans whose income went to the temples.[2] Another town which was called B. Rahun (B.rajun ?) had seven hundred idol temples. They possessed sources of revenue and courtesans' houses were regularly organised. In each temple there were 10 or 20 of them.[3] There were seven hundred beautiful females in one of the temples of Debul, who were captured by Kasim alongwith other men.[4] Kazwini also records that the duty of five hundred damsels at the temple of Somanātha were to sing and dance at the door.[5] Al-Biruni also mentions that there were five hundred damsels in the temple of Somanātha who were ever ready to please the deity by dancing before him.[6] Day by day the number of the Devadāsīs was on the increase. Dr. U.N. Ghoshal, on the basis of the statement of Chau-ju-Kua, has pointed out that there were twenty thousand dancing girls in four thousand temples of Gujarat.[7] Not only in the temples of Gujarat but also in other parts of the country temples had the institution of the Devadāsis. Kālidāsa refers to the dancing girls in the temple of Mahākāla at Ujjain.[8] Hsuan Tsang had noticed dancing girls in the Sun temple of

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1. *Hudud*, p. 90.
2. Marvazi, p. 52.
3. Ibid, p. 52 (67).
4. *Chachnama*, p. 84.
5. Elliot, I, p. 98.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 116.
7. *Struggle for Empire*, pp. 495-496; Cf. Altekar : *Position of Women*, p. 185; Nazim : *Sultan Mahmud of Gazna*, p. 211.
   Merutuṅga mentions Devadāsīs in the Kumāra Vihāra in Somanātha-paṭṭana (*Prabandha Cintāmaṇi*, p. 108).
8. *Meghadūta*, I.36.

Multan[1] The Bhaviṣya Purāṇa suggests that the best way to win Sūryyaloka is to dedicate a bevy of prostitutes to a Solar temple.[2] The Padma Purāṇa recommends that beautiful damsels should be purchased for dedication to the temples.[3] In the Rājataraṅgiṇī we have references to the existence of this custom in Kashmir from the 8th century onwards.[4] Inscriptional evidences also reveal that courtesans (Pramadakūla) were attached with temples of gods, 'put on their ornaments and best garments and attended with their Shulapalas to celebrate religious festivals by instrumental music, dancing, singing and so forth.'[5] It is said that king Rājarāja Cola built the Tanjore temple in the beginning of the eleventh century A.D. and provided for the temple service no less than 400 dancing girls[6] The Devapara Praśasti of Sena king Vijaya Sena records that the king provided one hundred beautiful girls to his temple.[7] In other inscriptions also there is reference to the pernicious custom of Devadāsīs.[8] Most of the temples of South India engaged dancing girls for the service of gods.[9]

Al-Biruni refers to the opposition of the Brāhmaṇas to the institution of Devadāsīs, but the kings retained it for the purpose of revenue. C.V. Vaidya thinks that the observation of Al-Biruni is not probably very correct as regards

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1. Watters, II, p. 254,
   I-tsing records that even Buddhist deities were served by the dancing girls (Takakusu , p.147).
2. *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa,* I.93.67.
3. *Padma Purāṇa, Sṛṣṭi Khaṇḍa,* 52, 97.
4. *Rāj.,* IV.31.36.
   The *Rājataraṅgiṇī* also mentions that the Devadāsīs could be taken away for personal enjoyment of the kings. Sahajā, a devadāsī, was taken away by prince Utkarṣa as a concubine into the royal harem. (VIII.858). See, p. 87.
5. *EI,* IX, p. 27.
6. *South Indian Inscription,* II. Pl 66.
7. *EI,* I, pp. 310-324; Cf. *The Tejapura Grant* (*JASB,* IX, pp. 766 ff,)
8. *JRASB,* XIII (1947), p. 71; *EI,* IV, pp. 198-205; *JBORS,* (1931), Vol. XVII, p. 124; *EI,* I, pp. 61-66.
9. Minakshi : *Administration and Social Life Under the Pallavas,* p, 177.

the Brāhmaṇas and the kings.[1] No doubt Vaidya's statement is based on Puranic accounts which lay down a list of the duties and rights of the Veśyās (Veśyā dharma) and some special laws applicable to them.[2] They recommend that special arrangements should be made to enlist the services of singing girls to provide vocal and instrumental music at the time of divine services.[3] Undoubtedly there was opposition to the Puranic recommendations but the reformers failed to stop it. However, Al-Biruni's statement is quite near to the truth. We know that reformers like Haribhadra Sūri, Jineśvara Sūri and Jinavallabh Sūri tried to oppose it and raised their voice against such women in temples.[4] The Kuṭṭinīmatam mentions opposition to this custom when it was introduced in the Viśwanātha temple of Vārāṇasī by the Brāhmaṇas and ascetics.[5] Opposition failed because the practice was supported by kings and members of the richer section of the society. This can be confirmed by a tenth century inscription of Rājasthān, which records that king Jojalladeve of Nadol did not merely 'orders courtesans to join the processions of all the temples of Nadol but even directed his descendants to punish (even) leaned people, old men and others who tried to interfere with this time-honoured custom'.[6] Even the most powerful king Kumārapāla Caulukya found himself helpless to stop this custom and had to console himself by saying about the prostitutes, "I have already banished theft and adultery from my dominions. As for prostitution, it is something insignificant. Nothing is lost or gained by its removal or continuance."[7] However, royal support eventually succeeded in making the custom

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1. Vaidya : *HMHI*, Vol. III, p. 398.
2. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, Ch. 70.
3. Altekar : *op.cit.*, p. 182.
4. Sharma : *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, p 260; *Rajasthan through The Ages*, p. 462. Cf. *Dharmabindu*, p. 15.
5. *Kuṭṭinīmatam*, vv. 712-755.
6. EI, XI, p. 28.
7. *Mahārājaparājaya*, p. 80.

general and popular.[1] Dr. Sharma thinks that probably the reason was that Veśyās provided entertainment to the people, were a source of income to the state 'and provided that sophistically cultured company which many could not have in their homes'.[2] Some are inclined to argue that the early marriages of girls and the Purda System made husbands seek good entertainment by visiting the houses of prostitutes who were learned in all the arts.[3] In the temples a large number of Devadāsīs were employed not only to serve the deities but also to attract visitors who were also a source of income to the temples. There the visitors could pay their respects to the gods and could entertain themselves. It need hardly be pointed out that this attitude of the kings and the people not only spoiled the spiritual atmosphere of the country but also contributed to moral degradation, so noticeable at the time of the Turkish invasion of India.

The Prostitutes : A Recognised Institution

Besides temple-girls, there were another class of women who were engaged in regular prostitution. This class of women was noted for its beauty and the art of singing and dancing. This is an old institution and may be traced to very early times in our history.[4] There is reference to it in most literary works. Vātsyāyana, Daṇḍina, Dāmodara Gupta and Kṣemendra all have mentioned them in their works.[5] Every town of early medieval India had prostitutes, who were the pride, wealth and luxury of the great cities. The kings also maintained them. Al-Biruni remarks, "People think with regard to harlotry that it is allowed with them. In reality, the matter is not as people think, but it is rather this that the Hindus are not very severe in punishing whoredom. The fault, however, in this lies with the kings not with the nation."[1] He further informs us that kings made them an attraction for their cities for financial reasons. Al-Biruni goes on to say, "By the revenues which they derive from the business both as fines and taxes, they went to recover the expenses which their treasury has to spend on the army."[2] Abu Zayd and other writers also make mention of this institution. Abu Zayd, in his supplement, records that in the Kans or inns, which the Indians build for the accommodation of travellers, they settle public women, who expose themselves to travellers. Indians number this among their meritorious deeds."[3] He further remarks that some practised it quite openly in the markets, which was supposed to be the rewards of the gods, to their mothers coming as a result of the latter's prayer to them.[4] This indicates the nature of the prostitution performed by the Devadāsīs. Marvazi also refers to the courtesans in the town of S.Labur, which had three separate markets, housing, courtesans whose fees went to the idol temples. "Some of them are worth 1 danaq, some 2 danaqs, but mostly the fee is 1 dirham without any addition."[5] Though they were not closely associated with temples like the devadāsīs, they had to pay some portion of their income to the temples. The author of Hudud-al-Alam mentions that in the town of Nunun there were numerous brothels (rusipikhan).[6] As regards their separate localities or markets in the towns, we may presume that they were not generally allowed to mix with common people on moral as well as medical grounds. So far as Al-Biruni's remark on the financial aspect of the institution is concerned, it may be noted that from very early times, the Indian state had provided that they should pay taxes on their earnings. Kautilya, for instance, laid down that a prostitute should pay one-fif-

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[1] Altekar : *Op.cit.*, p. 184.

[2] Sharma : *Rajasthan through the Ages*, p. 462; *Early Cauhan Dynasties*, p. 260.

[3] B.N. Sharma : *Social Life in Northern India*, p. 29.

[4] Kane : *HDS*, II, p. 637.

[5] Vātsyāyana : *Kāmasūtra*, Daṇḍina : *Daśkumāracarit*, II, pp. 66-68; Dāmodara Gupta : *Kuṭṭianīmatam* (Ed. T.N. Ray), vv. 392-403; Kṣemendra : See the *Kāvyamālā Series*, Vols. I, II, X, for the works of Kṣemendra

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 157.
2. Ibid.
3. Abu Zayd (*Akhabar*), p. 65; Sulayman (*Sup.*), pp. 87-88.
4. Ibid, p. 66.
5. Marvazi, p. 52 (66) (52).
6. *Hudud*, p. 88.

teenth as royal share of her monthly income. She was also liable to be heavily fined for certain specified offences. Besides their social or financial utility, they were sometimes engaged as spies for securing valuable information to the state.[1] A twelfth century inscription says that a courtesan named Usapa–Pattana was freed from paying Daśabandha (a tax) by a certain Rānak Brāhmaṇa of Karnāṭadeśa [2] The prostitutes were protected by the state. If someone was found committing an offence against them, he had to pay heavy fines.[3] No doubt, the interest of the state as well as of the kings combined to continue the institution. The rulars did not like any opposition against them and their business.[4] They not only made the cities attractive[1] but also adorned the royal courts by their presence. No royal court of India was without them. Indied no one could think of a darbar without courtesans.[6] According to Bāṇa Harṣa was surrounded by prostitutes.[7] Besides providing recreation to people in various social functions, they also attended the royal courts and amused the kings and his courtiers by their superb performances.[8] The Kharataragacchapaṭṭavāla of Jinapāla describes their presence in the court of Pṛthvīrāja III.[9] They helped the kings

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1. *Arthaśāstra,* Book III, Ch. XXVII.
2. *ASIAR,* 1908-1909, p. 119; *Inscriptions of Northern India,* Nos 259, 260.
3. A.K. Majumdar : *The Chaulukyas of Gujarat,* p. 344.
4. EI, XI, p. 28; *Mahārājaparājaya,* p. 83.
5. "The City of Rāmāvatī was 'full of Joy' on account of the youthful heavenly courtesans" (Sandhyākaranandi as quoted by B.P. Mazumdar : *Soc. Economice Hist. of N. India,* p. 370.) Lakṣmaṇasen's capital city Vijayapura had a large number of courtesans (*Rāmacarita,* III. 37). Mathurā and Śrāvastī had also beautiful courtesans (Kṣemendra : *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*). Majumdar : op. cit., p. 370.
   They are included in the description of the City of Ayodhyā by Dhanapāla in his *Tilakamañjarī.*
6. Amarachanda in his *Kāvyakalpalatāvṛtti* lays down that the description of a royal court should be given with the description of kings surrounded by the courtesans. (p. 25, v. 64.).
7. *Harṣacarita,* II, p. 75 ff.; *Kādambarī,* p. 172.
8. Nayacandra : *Hammīra Mahākāvya,* XIII.11-34; *Vīsaladeva Rāso,* III.75.
9. Sharma : op. cit, p. 261.

in taking bath, in performing nīrājana and accompanied them to the temples where they danced before the deities.[1] Beautiful courtesans were also presented to the king by their feudatories. They did so to gain royal favour.[2] Their influence was also felt in the courts.[3] It was but natural that they would have been maintained by the kings.

Immoral Practices

Besides prostitution and the Devadāsī system, other immoral practices and laxity of character also prevailed among women. We are told by the Chachnama that women indulged in drinking. Sometimes Drohar Bai used to drink liquor in the company of women who sang and danced at that occasion. We are also informed that his unmarried sister Jania also took wine and went alone to the place of Jaisiah in the night to have 'delights and raptures' of his company and wished to sleep with him.[4] It is also narrated that queen Suhandi of king Sahasi Rai fell in love with Chach, the Brāhmaṇa chamberlain and secretary. She even sent a message to Chach through a cunning go-between (an old-women) and after the death of Sahasi Rai, she made Chach king and removed other claimants to the throne and ultimately married him.[5] This type of sensual excesses of the ladies of the palace and court have been narrated by Kalhaṇa in the Rājataraṅgiṇī which records the immoral life of women in the royal houses of Kashmir. As regards the drinking of wine by women, we have literary evidences to show that women indulged in drinking and sometimes lost their senses as well as their womanly gestures. Saduktikarṇāmṛta,[6] Sūktimuktāvalī.[7] and Sāraṅga-

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1. *Priyadarśikā*, I.11; *Kumārapālacarita*, VI.32; I.66-67.
2. *Harṣanātha Inscription of Vigraharāja* II, v. 24.
3. Sharma : *op cit.*, p. 261.
4. *Chachnama*. pp. 182-184.
5. Ibid, pp. 16-23.
6. *Sadukti*., p. 148 (Ed. by R. Sharma and H.D. Sharma).
7. *Sūktimuktāvalī*, pp. 266-67.

dharapaddhati[1] reveal that men as well as women took part in drinking bouts. Al-Masudi also records that Indians sometimes make girls drink in order to show their mirth so that the beholder may be inspired with gaitey by their merriments.[2] The law-givers are critical of it and they even recommend that a wife can be superseded if she drinks.[3]

Some Muslim writers have pointed to formication as lawful in India. Abu-Zayd observes that prostitution in India is considered by the people as a meritorious deed.[4] Qazwim merely states that formication is lawful among the Hindus.[5] The writer of Hudud-al-Alam confirms it.[6] Ibn Khurradadhabih and Marvazi mention that except in the kingdom of Qumar the people and the kings of India consider formication lawful.[7] Ibn Faqih[8] and Ibn Rusta[9] also say that all the kings find

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1. *Sārangadharapaddhati*, vv. 3647-3653.
   Bāṇa speaks of women with their mouths full of wine and "clanking ornaments of wine-flushed beauties." *HC*, III, p. 97; Cf. *Kādambarī*, p. 117; *Ratnāvalī*, III. v. 13; *Nāgānanda*, III, p. 109.
2. Nainar, p. 102.
3. *Vyavahāra* (*KKT*) pp. 132, 146; *Smṛticandrikā*, 247; on Yāj., I.73; See, pp. 113.
4. Adu-Zayd (*Supplement*), pp. 87-88.
   Abu Zayd writes about the kingdom of Sarandib (Ceylon) that 'debauchery runs high in this country, as well among the women as among the men; for they are laid under no restraint. It runs so high, that sometimes, a foreign merchant, just arrived from sea shall send for the daughter of a king of the country and she shall come to him to the fishing grounds with her father's consent and privity.' (Abu Zayd, ibid, pp. 85-86). Cf. Manucci : *Storia, Tr. Irvine*, IV, p. 152; Robert Knox : *Historical Relations of the Island of Ceylon, Ed.* of 1817, pp. 186-87. But we should remember, as Yule remarks, that these observations are mere travellers' tales and totally unworthy of credit (*Marco Polo*, II, pp. 56-57).
5. Nainar, p. 104.
6. Hudud, p. 86.
7. Khur., pp. 66-68; Elliot, I, p. 13; Marvazi, p. 46 (44).
8. Ibnul Faqih, p. 15.
9. Ibn Rusta, p. 133 (Tr. 48-49; 51). Ibn Rusta remarks about the king of Qumar that he punishes with execution those commit (the offence) of (wine) drinking and adultery (Tr. 49). Sulayman too praises the king of Qumar. He says, "in the country of Qumar debauchery with women

formication lawful, but if the man marries a woman and by accident she and some one else commit adultery, the kings kill both the man and woman. On this subject Al-Idrisi's observation deserves mention. He says, "The kings of India and its people permit formication, and consider wine unlawful exept the king of Qumar. He prohibits both formication and wine"[1] He further writes, "Formication is permissible in the whole country of Ballahra except with married women. If a person wishes to have conjugal relations with his daughter or his sister or his maternal aunt or paternal aunt, he does so provided that they are not already married, similarly, a brother does so with sister."[2] According to Muthhar, formication is permissible for those who practise celibacy [3] It may be noted that the observation of Muslim writers regarding formication[4] seems very vague and it has been misunderstood. Formication was never accepted in India at any time and in any part of the country." They were completely misinformed about conjugal relations and indulged in depicting a very distorted and morbid picture of the Indians in respect of formication, etc."[5] Dr. Nainar remarks, "Such statements are quite untrue with regard to any period of Indian history." The statements of these writers that formication is lawful among the Hindus is not correct. Perhaps the Arabs did not

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and the use of wine are forbidden (Sulayman, p. 64; Cf. Marvazi. p. 153). The king of Qumar (Khmer) referred to by the Muslim writers may be the founder of the Empire Jayavarman II (A.D. 802-69). See Marvazi Notes by Minorsky, pp. 152-153.

[1] Idrisi, p. 62, f.n. 5.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Mutahhar, IV, p. 12 (Ed. Paris, 1907).

[4] For formication the word is used زنا (jinā) which means illicit sexual intercourse of any kind, i e., formication and adultery, but also prostitution. Masudi uses it in the sense of prostitution in respect of women of China who lived such disorderly lives (Sprenger, p. 317, Maynard, I, p. 296). "By formication must be meant some of the loose forms of marriage practised by Hindus, e.g., 'Gāndharva' 'secret informal unions by copulation' Minorsky, *Marvazi* p. 43, (44). But Hodivala takes it in the sense of prostitution." p. 12.

[5] Maqbul Ahmad : *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 125.

fully understand the various forms of marriages which the Hindu law takes cognizance of."[1]

However, Al-Biruni puts the matter in perspective and holds that the Indian kings were responsible for permitting this practice for financial gains.[2] He says, "People think with regard to harlotry that is allowed with them.... In reality, the matter is not as people think, but it is rather this that the Hindus are not very severe in punishing whoredom. The fault, however, in this lies with the kings and not the nations."[3] He then mentions Devadāsīs who were engaged in sacred prostitution, which is also referred to by other Muslim writers. Hsuan Tsang was also struck by it.[4]

Although Al-Biruni blames the kings for encouraging adultery, he remarks, "An adultress is driven out of the house of the husband and banished."[5] According to Sulayman, "If any man in Indies runs away with a woman, and abuses her body, they kill both him and the woman, unless it be proved that she was forced, then the man only is punished with death, but if the woman consented to the evil deed, they are punished with death, both the one and other."[6] Punishment for an adultress was undoubtedly heavy and cruel. According to Vasistha, an adultress was to be shaved, to have her head anointed with clarified butter and to be paraded naked on an ass and left to die on the Great Journey.[7] Gautama goes so far as to recommend that she should be openly devoured by dogs if her lover was man of low caste.[8] Manu also holds the

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1. Nainar, p.104f.n. 28.
2. Al-Biruni II, p. 157.
3. Ibid.
4. Beal : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, II, p. 274.
5. Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.
6. Sulayman, p. 34; *Akhbar*, p. 24.
   Gardizi says, "The Chandalas have beautiful woman. If a Brahmana falls in love with such a woman, the keepers of religion expel him and consider him no more a Brahman. For this reason he who touches a Chandala becomes subject to harm." (Gardizi, p. 627).
7. Vas., XXI, 1-3; Cf. Nārad *Strīpumsa*, v.91.
8. *Gaut* , XXIII.14. Cf *Śantiparva*, 165.64.

same view.[1] According to Vṛddha Hārīta a confirmed adultress should be punished by cutting off her nose, ears and lips and ultimately should be banished. He also prescribes death penalty for her.[2] In the case a man, if a Śūdra commits adultery with a woman of higher castes, Gautama prescribes that his penis should be cut off and sometimes he may have to suffer death.[3] Manu clearly recommends that if a Śudra indulges in intercourse with a woman of the Brāhmaṇa caste he should be punished with death.[4] If a Brāhmaṇa commits adultery with women of the three lower castes he should only be fined five hundred.[5] But it should be noted that severe punishment for women for adultery was considerably reduced and softened by the later Smṛti-writers. They recommend penance to be performed for males in case of adultery.[6] Dr. Altekar rightly observes that two standards were maintained in respect of sex morality for men and women. "A single lapse came to be regarded as fatal for women, while even a moral wreck was to be revered as God by his dutiful wife." Evidently men were treated leniently for the same crime, while women "had no chance if they had committed a single mistake."[7] It may be noted that by the 11th century A.D. lapses of women came to be treated with greater sternness.

General Attitude Towards Women

The Chachnama expresses the feeling of a woman, especially of one who is issueless and widow. When king Sahasi

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1. *Manu*, VIII.371.
2. Hārīta, VII.192.
3. *Gaut.*, XII.1.2.
4. Manu., VIII.366; Cf. *Vas Dh.S.*, 21.1.
5. Manu., VIII.385. Dh.S., 21 1.
6. *Atri*, V.1-5; *Parāśara*, IV.20 and XI.87; *Bṛhad Yama*, IV.36; *Vyāsa*, II.49-50; *Mit. on Yāj*, I.70-72. Cf. *Vasiṣṭh*, XXI.10.12; *Manu*, XI.177. *Devala* prescribes that she should be accepted again as wife after the next menses. (vv. 48-51.). As regards banishment, we may conclude that she was deprived of her right as a wife in respect of religious rites and conjugal relations with her husband. According to *Manu*, penance depends on the caste of the adulterer and in case of women it could be performed. (XI.60.118.)
7. Altekar, *op. cit.*, p 314.

Rai was on death-bed his queen Suhandi told Chach, "If the king dies, there is no issue of him to inherit the kingdom. His near relations, therefore, will secure all his property and his country. There is no doubt they will disinherit and distress me owing to their estrangement (from me). When even during the lifetime of the king, they called me ugly names, they will at such a time as this deprive me of my life and property."[1] This indicates that widowed as well as sonless women were not looked upon with sympathy. By and large the dictum of Manu was generally followed who recommends, "Her father protects (her) in childhood, her husband protects (her) in youth, and her sons protect (her) in old age, a woman is never fit for independence.'[2] According to most authorities a women was always a minor in law. She was treated as equivalent to a Śūdra, no matter to whatever class she might belong.[3]

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[1] *Chachnama*, p. 18.

[2] *Manu.*, IX.3

[3] Basham, *Wonder that was India*, p. 177.

CHAPTER V

EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE PEOPLE

Everyday life of the people has an important bearing on the cultural life of a country. The information furnished by Muslim writers on this subject is rather scrappy and fragmentary. These foreign sources alone will not enable one to have a fairly systematic picture of Indian life. In this chapter we have made an attempt to give an account of the everyday life of the Indian people on the basis of materials available in the writings of the Muslims and in Samskrit sources. Both together provide interesting information on the subject.

Food

As regards the food of the people, Sulayman writes that the people of Hind ate rice.[1] Ibn ul Faqah also confirms it and adds that Indians did not eat wheat.[2] Ibn Masah (who died in A.D. 1000) also states that rice was the most common food of the people.[3] According to Idrisi, the people of Naharwala took rice, peas, beans, haricots, lentils mash, fish and animals that died natural death.[4] The people of Kambaya used wheat,[5] and rice, because its fertile land produced both these grains.[6] Marvazi only mentions that in the temple of Multan various kinds of food were cooked and spiced for the deity.[7] Thus it appears that rice was the staple food of the people. Literary evidences also show that rice was generally

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1. Sulayman, p. 34.
2. Nainar, p. 100.
3. Ferrand, *Textes Geographiques*, I, p. 238.
4. Idrisi, p. 61.
5. Maqdisi mentions 'bread' which could be purchased in Multan. *Nadvi*, p. 29.
6. Idrisi, p. 64.
7. Marvazi, p. 49 (54). Ibn Rusta mentions that rice was offered to the deity, p. 136.

used by the people.[1] Besides rice other food grains were used in the preparations of various kinds of dishes. We may presume that people used all such articles of food as were produced in the country, namely, wheat, barley, rice, pulses, gram, maize, jwar, bajara, vegetables and sugar, milk and butter of which various preparations were made.[2] Some vegetables were forbidden to the Brāhmaṇas by religious code. These were "onions, garlic, a kind of gourd, the root of a plant, like the carrots called *Kand* (?), and another vegetable which grows round their tanks called nali."[3] Onion, leek, mushrooms, garlic and red garlic (Karañja) are placed by the Dharmaśāstras in the list of forbidden food.[4] Manu says that besides garlic, leeks, onions, mushrooms all plants springing from impure substances are unfit to be eaten by twice-born men.[5] Though onion was regarded as a nutritious vegetable,[6] it was avoided by the Brāhmaṇas, because cut-onions resemble flesh and eating garlic was a foreign innovation.[7] Sachau identifies nali with Saṁskṛta 'nālikā'[8] and Jolly identifies it with Lotus.[9]

Among the spices pepper,[10] ginger and salt were commonly used by the people. Milk was consumed in various forms. We are informed that for the purification of those who were forced to accept Islam and wanted to return to their old faith, cow's milk, curds and butter along with urine and dung were prescribed.[1] Among the fruits commonly used were dates, coconuts, oranges, mangoes, grapes, banana[2] and lemon. Sulayman says, "There are no date trees either in China or in Hind, but they have other trees and fruits which we do not have. There are no grapes in Hind, but the Chinese have a few. They have other kinds of fruits in plenty. But in Hind pomegranate is the commonest."[3] Idrisi mentions various kinds of fruits. Honey was also used.[4] Istakhri, Ibn Hauqal and Maqdisi mention mango.[5] About dates and coconuts Al-Biruni writes that the Hindus in South India have a slender tree like the date and coconut palms.[6] Abu Zayd also mentions coconuts.[7] Masudi writes that orange and lemon are special products of the country.[8]

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[1] *KSS.* XLIII.55, LIV.170, LXII.181-182; XXIX.88; Wheat was also used, ibid, CXXI.74-76. *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (Eg. Tr.) p. 200; Hemacandra, *Deśīnāmamālā*, I.88, VI.44, *Mānasollāsa*, II, p. 115; *Naiṣadhacarita*, canto. XIV.68; *Rāj.* I,246, II. 18, V 116-117, VII.140; *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, 748-754; *Deśopadeśh* VIII. Hsuan Tsang gives a long list of food grains and fruits. Rice and wheat were mostly consumed. Wheat flour was abundant in the North-West, rice and barley in the West, and rice in Magadha. Among fruits, mango, melon, madhuka, jack fruit were used by the people. (*Record* II, pp. 43-44).

[2] Ojha, *Maddhyakālīna Bhāratīya Saṁskṛti*, p. 57.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p 135.

[4] Ram Gopal, *India of Vedic Kalpasūtras*, p. 163.

[5] *Manu*, V.5; Cf. Yaj. I.176; Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara forbid the use of onion and garlic and include them among the forbidden articles of food. (*Niyat, KKT*, pp. 275-284; *Gṛ. Ratnākara*, pp 352-367).

[6] *Rāj.* VIII.143; Cf. *Deśopadeśa* III.32.

[7] *Rāj.* I 342.

[8] Al-Biruni, II, p. 392.

[9] Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 351.

[10] Nainar, pp. 201-202.

Meat : Generally Consumed

Meat was one of the most important articles of food. It was generally taken by the people, and on festive days even the Brāhmaṇas too were allowed to take meat. About the non-vegetarian food of the people Al-Biruni says, "Originally killing in general was forbidden to them as it is to the Christians and Manichaeans. People, however, have the desire for meat, and will always fling aside every order to the contrary. Therefore, the here-mentioned law applies in particular only to the Brahmanas, because they are the guardians of the religion, and because it forbids them to give way to their lusts."[9] Al-Masudi also records that they refrained from

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp 162- 63.
2. Nainar, p. 194.
3. Ibid, p. 198.
4. Ibid, p. 199.
5. Ibid.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 171.
7. Nainar, p. 197.
8. Nadvi, p. 63; *Muruj*, I, p. 438
9. Al-Biruni, II, p. 151.

eating animals.[1] Al-Qazwini, while writing about Saimuir, says, "The infidels do not slaughter animals, nor do they eat flesh, fish or eggs, but there are some who will eat animals that have fallen down precipices, or that they have been gored to death, but they do not eat those that have died a natural death."[2] From the above accounts of Al-Biruni and Masudi, and to some extent of Al-Qazwini it is clear that only the Brāhmaṇas were forbidden meat. At another place Al-Biruni says that the Brāhmaṇas had the privilege of eating flesh of the ganda.[3] Muslim accounts on flesh eating by the Brāhmaṇas are conflicting. They may be attributed to the fact that the writers on Dharmaśāstra are not unanimous on this point. They generally recommend that the Brāhmaṇas should abstain from flesh, though not quite completely. They were generally not in the habit of eating flesh, as the provisions of the later Smṛti show. But the Vyāsa Smṛti is of the view that in sacrifice or Śrāddha, if a Brāhmaṇa is invited, he must eat flesh otherwise he would fall into perdition.[4] The Yama Smṛti, the Kūrma Purāṇa and the Varāh Purāṇa permit the eating of meat, which is offered to the gods or served in a Śrāddha.[5] Medhātithi also permits meat if the animal slaughter is done for religious purposes.[6] An inscription of Bhoja records that the Brāhmaṇas took meat in a Śrāddha ceremony.[7] The Samaraiccakahā mentions a Brāhmaṇa having been offered meat in a funeral repast.[1] Along with other castes the Brāhmaṇas are allowed to take meat by Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, provided that it has been offered beforehand to gods and manes.[2] Thus it is clear that the Brāhmaṇas generally abstained from meat, though not completely.[3] The Kṣatriyas continued to be meat-eaters.[4]

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[1] Masudi, I, p 154.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 97

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 204. As regards the eating of the flesh of ganda, we are informed by Sulayman that its flesh was not forbidden and he himself has eaten it (Sulayman, p. 18).

[4] G.H. Ojha, *op.cit.*, p. 98.

[5] *KKT*, III, p. 315; *Kūrma Purāṇa*, XVII.35,36; *Varāha Purāṇa*, V. 12-13.

[6] *On Manu*, II.10.

[7] *IHQ*, VIII, p. 311. King Alhaṇadeva prohibited animal slaughter on certain days of the month. According to this injunction the Vaiśyas and the tambolikas could be awarded capital punishment for slaughtering animals while the Brāhmaṇas were fined five drammas for the same offence. (*EI*, XI, pp. 45-46). This implies meat eating by the Brāhmaṇas.

Allowed and Forbidden Flesh

Al-Biruni's list of animals and birds whose killing was allowed includes sheep, goats, gazelles, hares, rhinoceroses, buffaloes, fish, water and land birds like sparrows, ringdoves, francolins, doves, peacocks and other animals which were not loathsome to man nor noxious. Those which were forbidden include cows, horses, mules, asses, camels, elephants, tame poultry, crows, parrots, nightingales, all kinds of eggs and wine. The latter was allowed to the Śūdras.[5] According to Idrisi, the people of Mansura and Naharavara took fish and the meat of other animals.[6] The people of Qandahara ate the meat of goats.[7] Undoubtedly Al-Biruni has drawn up the list from the Smṛtis which have numerous rules regarding the eating of flesh of animals, birds and fishes. They forbid the flesh of all five nailed animals except procupine, hare, svavidh (a boar or hedge hog), iguana, rhinocerose and tortoise.[8] According to Gautama, the flesh of all animals

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1. *Samaraiccakahā*, p. 578.
2. *Niyata* (*KKT*), pp. 311-317; *Gr. Ratnākara*, pp. 380-384; *Śrāṅgadhara-paddhati*, v. 633.
3. Under the growing influence of Jainism, vegetarianism was becoming popular. The Vaiśyas were generally vegetarian in diet, specially those who had adopted the Jain faith, but some of them were non-vegetarian also (*SJGM*, II, p. 102). There is provision for them to take meat in Śrāddhas (C.V. Vaidya, *HMHI*, II, p. 180). In this connection Vijñāneśvara and Aparārka repeat Medhātithi's list of Occasions on which meat was lawful food (*on Yāj*. I, 178-9). Even Jain monks could take meat in case of emergency (J.P. Jain, *Life in Ancient India*, pp. 127-128).
4. Sharma, *ECD*, p. 265.
5. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 151-152.
6. Idrisi, pp. 43, 61.
7. Ibid, p. 66.
8. *Rām.*, *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa*, 17-39.

which have two rows of teeth in two jaws and of hairy and hairless animals of village cocks and hogs and of cows and bulls is forbidden. The lists include both kinds of birds, i.e., those whose flesh was forbidden and those whose flesh was allowed. All the birds that subsist on raw flesh, the cātaka, parrot, haṁsa, all birds that dwelt in village (such as pigeons), baka, birds that scratch dung hills, are forbidden for food, while wild cocks and peacocks were permitted.[1] Hārīta, quoted in Gṛhastha Ratnākara, mentions the flesh of goats, rams, buffaloes, deer of various kinds, rhinoceroses, and large forest boars as permissible, while Devala, quoted by the same authority forbids the flesh of cows, asses, camels, horses, elephants, lions, tigers, bears, śarabhas, snakes, rats, mice and cats, mongoose, village hog, dog, jackals, animals of unknown species, cheetas, dark-faced apes, monkeys and human beings.[2] Fish was generally eaten. Lakṣmīdhara, Someśvara, Kalhaṇa all mention fish eating.[3] Fish-juice (matsya yusa or matsyasupa) was considered a strength-giving tonic food.[4] According to Jīmūtavāhana, ugly and spineless fishes should not be taken.[5] But Manu forbids all kinds of fish.[6]

Flesh of Cow Forbidden

We have already said that cows were not to be killed, though according to the Gṛhya and Dharmasūtras, on several occasions, not only other animals but even cows could be killed.[7] Speaking generally, the flesh of cows and bulls has been forbidden by almost all the writers. Muslim writers tell us that the Hindus, included the Muslims among the

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[1] *Gaut* , 17.29, 34-35; *Manu.*, XI.14; *Yāj*, I,172.

[2] *Gṛ. Ratnākara*, p 375; Lakṣmīdhara forbids the flesh of cows, horses, mules, asses, camels, elephants, tame poultry, crows, parrots, and nightingales (*Niyata*, pp. 304-308).

[3] *Niyata*, p. 427; *Mānasollāsa Viṁśati*, III.13.1358-59; *Rāj*. V.119; *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, 508-514

[4] *Rāj* VII.522; *Samayamātrikā*, II.25, 71.

[5] R.C. Majumdar (Ed.), *History of Bengal*, I, pp. 611-612.

[6] *Manu.*, V.15; Cf. *Vas.Dh S.*, 14.41-42; *Gaut.*, 17-36; Yāj. I.177-178.

[7] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 776-777; Ram Gopal, **op. cit** , pp. 472-73.

Mlecchas who were considered impure cow-eaters and were hated.[1] It was known to the Muslims that the Hindus did not eat beef.[2] Al-Biruni remarks, "They sip the stale of cows, but they do not eat their meat."[3] As to the reason for not eating beef he writes, "for their country is hot, the inner parts of the bodies are cold, the natural warmth becomes feeble in them···."[4] Besides, their power of digestion is weak. He also refers to a mythical story regarding the prohibition of the cow's flesh.[5] It is interesting to note that he also advances the economical reason. "As for the economical reason, we must keep in mind that the cow is the animal which serves man in travelling by carrying his loads, in agriculture in the works of ploughing and sowing, in the household by the milk and the product made thereof. Further, man makes use of its dung and in winter-time even of its breath. Therefore, it was forbidden to eat cows meat."[6] His remarks that they (Brāhmaṇas) do not eat beef is generally applicable to all the Hindus. The cow has been regarded as sacred from very early times. Numerous passages of the Vedic Saṁhitās proclaim the sanctity of the cow.[7] A gradual trend against cow-slaughter can be clearly seen in the Vedic literature.[8] According to Manu, if one sacrifices one's life in the defence of Brāhmaṇas and cows, one becomes free from the sin of even Brāhmaṇa murder.[9] The Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra says that an untouchable may go to heaven by giving his life in defence of the Brāhmaṇas, cows, women and children.[10] In the Gautama Dharma Sūtra the cow is referred to as Devatā[11] and in the

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[1] See, pp. 18-21.

[2] Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p 207.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.

[4] Ibid, II, p. 152.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 152-53; Ibn Rusta says that according to a section of law who kills a cow shall be punished with death (Nainar, p. 106).

[7] *Ṛgveda*, VIII, 101, 15-16; *Vāj. Saṁ.* IV.19-20; *Ath. Veda*, X.10, XII. 4, [illegible]; Cf. Ram Gopal, *op.cit.*, pp. 472-73.

[8] Ram Gopal, *op.cit.*, p. 473.

[9] *Manu.*, XI. 79.

[10] *Viṣṇu Dh S.*, 16.18.

[11] *Gaut. Dh S.*, IX.13.14.

Ṛgveda she is called 'Devī.'[1] In this connection P.V. Kane remarks, "It appears that the cow was being raised to the status of divinity and there was a great revulsion of feeling about the cow. The great usefulness of the cow and the ox for agricultural purposes, in the family economy and as a means of exchange must have powerfully contributed to making the cow a divinity."[2] Gardizi informs us that the Hindus worshipped the cow and prostrated themselves before her whenever they saw her.[3] It is quite natural that those who venerated the cow so much would have not slaughtered her. Thus economic reasons coupled with religious sentiments account for the prohibition of cow-killing. The cow was looked up on as a divine creature for religious fulfilments.[4] The bull was also regarded as holy and it was considered 'auspicious to look at a bull during the observance of Vedic Vratas."[5] In this connection Idrisi remarks, "They have a great veneration for oxen, and by a privilege confined to the species, they inter them after death. When these animals are enfeebled by age and are unable to work, they free them from all labour and provide them with food without exacting any return."[6] The veneration for the cow was so great that for purification from serious lapses the Dharmaśāstras prescribe pañchagavya, which was prepared from the cow's milk, curds, butter, urine and dung.[7] Muslim writers have referred to it in connection with the reconversion of the Hindus to their old faith.[8]

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1. *Ṛgveda*, VIII.101.16.
2. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 773.
3. Gardizi, p. 630.
4. Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 773-75. According to Dharmasūtras, it is a sin to kill a cow and he who kills the cow is required to observe certain penances to expiate the sin. (*Gaut.Dh.S.*, XXII 20; *Baudh.Dh.S*, I.10, 19, 3-6).
5. *Gobh. Gṛ.S.*, III 2.34; Cf. *Jaimini Gṛ.S.*, I,17, 16.3
6. Elliot, I, p. 88; Nainar, p. 106; Maqbul Ahmad translates this passage in support of the Hindu respect for the cows. (Idrisi, p. 61)
7. *Baudh Gṛ.S.* II.20; Yāj. III.314; *Parāśara* XI.28-34; *Deval*, 62-65. *Laghuśatātapa*, 158-162; *Matsya Purāṇa*. 267.5-6; Cf. Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 773-774.
8. Al-Biruni, II, p. 163; Gardizi, p. 631; Maqdisi, IV, p. 13.

Though the list of Al-Biruni (regarding the flesh of animals to be taken or forbidden) is based on the provisions of the Smṛtis, we may accept it as depicting faithfully the existing practice of his times, when meat formed one of the main articles of food. In the seventh century Hsuan Tsang observed that on some occasions the flesh of fish, sheep and gazells could be eaten. The animals whose flesh was forbidden were bulls, asses, elephants, horses, hogs, dogs, foxes, wolves, lions, apes and monkeys. If somebody took the flesh of these animals, he was classed among the Antyajas.[1] On comparison Al-Biruni's list of animals is, in some respects, similar to that of Hsuan Tsang.

Slaughter of Animals : Conflicting Remarks

As regards the slaughter of animals, the accounts of writers differ in some respects. Sulayman says that neither the Chinese nor the Indians kill their animals by cutting the throat as did the Muslims, but they struck at the top of its head till it died.[2] Ibn ul Faqah adds that the people of Hind killed whatever they wanted to eat.[3] Idrisi says that the people of Naharwara lived upon rice, peas, beans, haricots, lentils mash, fish and animals that died a natural death, and that they did not slaughter a bird or an animal whether big or small.[4] Qazwini writes, 'The infidels do not slaughter animals, nor do they eat flesh, fish or eggs; but there are some who will eat animals that have fallen down precipices, or that have been gored to death, but they do not eat those that have died a natural death."[5] Buzurg bin Shahriyar says, "The Hindus eat the flesh of dead beasts (of which the throats have not been cut) that is to say the animal is clubbed on the head whether it be sheep, bird whatever else, till the

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1. Watters, I, p. 178.
2. Sulayman, p. 35; Nainar, p. 98, fn. 12.
3. Nainar. p. 98, fn. 13, p. 99, "It is a very sweeping remark and not entirely correct, for certain animals are slaughtered even by Brahmanas, but only for purposes of sacrifice."
4. Idrisi, p, 61; Elliot. I, p. 88.
5. Elliot, I, p. 97.

life has departed them, they use it for their food."[1] He further writes that even rats were eaten, as they were not included among the animals and birds that were forbidden.[2]

We may quote Al-Biruni on the kind of meat that was allowed. He says, "As matters stand thus, it is allowed to kill animals by means of strangulation, but only certain animals, others being excluded. The meat of such animals, the killing of which is allowed, is forbidden in case they die sudden death.[3] Those who ate the flesh of dead animals ware called Badhatau and they were reckoned among the Antyajas.[4] No doubt only the people of low order and those who were out of the pale of the caste system ate the flesh of animals which died a sudden or natural death. Indeed, slaughtering of animals had been the general practice since Vedic times.[5] The statement of Muslim writers that they did not slaughter animals applies to the people who did not slaughter animals themselves but took the flesh slaughtered by others. It may also apply to the Brāhmaṇas who were generally not addicted to meat-eating. Devala is against killing animals to satisfy ones tongue.[6] Yama also disfavours meat-eating and says that it incurs great sin.[7] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa also disfavours meat-eating.[8] Manu holds all people guilty of killing, who are engaged in cutting, killing animals and selling and purchasing meat.[9] The spread of Vaiṣṇavism and the influence of Jainism tended to wean people from flesh.

Inter-caste Dining

Inter-caste dining during this period was extremely unusual, though the earlier authorities like Gautama, Āpastamba and Baudhāyana had not been against it.[1] The privilege was even extended to the higher grade Śūdras.[2] In the early medieval period the rules regarding dining had become very rigid. In this connection Abu Zayd remarks, "There are certain Indians, who never eat out of the same dish, or upon the same table and would deem it a very great sin, if they should. When they come to Siraf and a prominent merchant invites them—they may be hundred more or less, they must each have a separate dish, entirely apart from the rest."[3] No doubt, the practice of eating in seclusion is a common practice among the Hindus. Al-Biruni informs us that inter-caste dining was prohibited. He writes, "If a Brahmana eats in the house of a Sudra for sundry days, he is expelled from his caste and can never regain it."[4] Angirasa[5] prohibits the dinner with a Śūdra and allows only with a Kṣatriya on festive days and with Vaiśyas in the time of distress.[6] Yama and Vyāsa permit a Brāhmaṇa only to beg and cook in the house of his own caste.[7] The food of a Śūdra was generally forbidden to the twice-born.[8] Not only there is no provision against a Brāhmaṇa eating with Kṣatriyas or Vaiśyas, Vedavyāsa unequivocally declares that one must know that the family with whom one eats is a dvija family.[9] But in the time of Al-Biruni conditions had changed considerably. He says, "Each of the four castes, when eating together, must form a group for themselves, one group not being allowed to comprise two men of different castes."[10] It is clear that in the time of Al-Biruni inter-caste dining had become most unusual. Even two Brāhmaṇas if they had enmity against each other, "make a barrier between the two seats by placing a board between them or by spreading a piece of dress, or in some other way, and if their is only a line drawn between them, they are considered as separated."[1] It is evident if two Brāhmaṇas could not dine together they would certainly not eat with members of other castes.

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[1] Shahriyar, p. 139; *Hindustan*, I, p. 216.

[2] Ibid, p 139.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 151.

[4] Ibid, I, p. 102.

[5] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 772.

[6] *Niyata (KKT)*, p. 321.

[7] Ibid, p. 533.

[8] *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, VII.15, 7.8.

[9] *Manu*, V.51.

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[1] *Gaut.*, XVIII; *Āpastamba*, II.3,4; *Baudh.*, II.3.14.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 161, 788-789.

[3] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), pp. 98-99; *Hindustan*, I, p. 69; Nainar, p. 100.

[4] Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

[5] *Aṅgirasa*, vv. 55-57.

[6] Quoted by Haradatta at *Gautama*, III.5.8.

[7] *Smṛti Candrikā*, p. 109.

[8] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 789.

[9] *Vyāsa*, III.56.

[10] Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

Manners Regarding Taking Food

On manners of taking food Al-Biruni writes, "The Hindus eat singly one by one, on a table-cloth of dung. They do not make use of the remainder of a meal, and plates from which they have eaten are thrown away if they are earthen."[2] At another place he writes, "Since it is forbidden to eat the remains of a meal, every single man must have his own food for himself, for if any one of the party who are eating should take of the food from one and the same plate, that which remains in the plate becomes, after the first eater has taken part, to him who wants to take as the second, *the remains of the meal*, and such is forbidden."[3] Similarly Hsuan Tsang observes, "All wash themselves before eating, they never use that which has been left over (from a former meal), they do not pass the dish, wooden and stone vessels, when used, must be destroyed, vessels of gold, silver, copper or iron after each meal, must be rubbed and polished. After eating they clean their teeth with a willow stick and wash their hands and mouth."[4] I-tsing gives a few more details.[5] He adds that to rinse the mouth after meals was regarded as necessary.[6] King Harṣa, it is said, used to rinse his mouth after taking his meals.[7] Sulayman observes that the Indians washed not only the mouth but the whole body before they ate, which the Chinese did not observe.[8]

As regards the Hindu practice of dining singly, we are

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p 102
2. Ibid, p. 180.
3. Ibid, I, p. 102.
4. Beal, I, p. 79; *Watters*, I, p. 157.
5. Takakusu, p. 24.
6. Ibid, p. 26.
7. *Harṣacarita*, III, p. 159.
8. Sulayman, p. 36.

told that one must take one's meals in private in a place screened from the public view. The Smṛti Candrikā quotes Devala, Uṣanas and the Padma Purāṇa in support of this point. One should take food in privacy, for one who does so is endowed with wealth and one who eats his meals in public becomes bereft of wealth; one should not eat in the sight of many (who are themselves not eating) and many men should not eat before a single person who is only looking at them."[1] The Smṛti Candrikā further quotes Ādi Purāṇa and Bṛhaspati on this subject, "one should take one's food alone and not in the company of even one's relatives or other Brāhmaṇas, since who can know the secret sins a person in whose company one eats is guilty of ?"[2] The place where one takes one's food should be freshly cleaned with cow-dung and be pure.[3]

About the eating place of Brāhmaṇas Al-Biruni says that "they prepared a separate table-cloth for each person eating by pouring water over a spot and plastering it with the dung of cows, the shape of the Brahmana's table-cloth must be square."[4] I-tsing also had observed that ground place (of eating) was besmeared with cow-dung and fresh leaves were spread over it.[5] Every Brāhmaṇa had a water vessel for himself while eating. If another used it, it was broken.[6]

Other customs regarding food habits of the Hindus are noticed by the Muslim writers. Obviously describing the custom of South India, Abu Zayd says that the kings and noble ate in coconut leaves specially prepared for the purpose. "And their meal over, they throw the table, the dishes and plates into the water together with the fragments they have left. Thus at every meal they have a new service."[7] Banana-leaves were also used for this purpose.[8] According

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1. SC, I, pp 221, 226.
2. Ibid, pp. 227, 228.
3. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 759.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 135.
5. Takakusu, p. 39.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 134.
7. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 99; *Hindustan*, I, pp. 69-70.
8. Ibn Rusta, p. 136. Marvazi, p, 49 (54), Ibn Battuta, p, 231,

to Al-Biruni, Indians drink wine before every meal. "They sip the stale of the cows but they do not eat their meat."[1] According to the Chachnama, drinking of the wine was done after finishing dinner.[2] The Chachnama informs us that after taking bath people took their meals.[3] In the royal houses after dinner wine was taken in private apartment and the members played chess with the guests.[4] In the morning people took breakfast.[5] Food was taken twice a day,[6] without reviling it.[7] According to Somadeva the best time was when one felt hungry.[8] It could be taken in quantity as was necessary to satisfy hunger.[9]

Betel-Chewing

Chewing the betel-leave (tāmbūla) was popular among the people. Visitors and guests were offered betel-leaves.[10] It was known to the Muslims that the Brāhmaṇas of Somanātha used betel-leaves with lime.[11] Buzurg bin Shahriyar mentions that on a religious occasion when two men were going to burn themselves for reaching heaven, they were chewing betel-leaves.[12] Masudi also confirms that when people took permission from the king to burn themselves they chewed betel-leaves.[13] According to Masudi betel-leaf is a product of India. He goes on to describe its merits as mentioned below. It has medical qualities and is taken with betel-nuts and lime. The gums and roots of teeth become stronger, mouth gets good smell, toxins are removed, it produces good hunger, it is sexual stimulant, teeth become red like pomegranate seeds. It produces exhilaration and body gets fatter. People of India, noble as well as those belonging to lower strata, do not like a person who does not chew betel-leaves and whose teeth are white.[1] Idrisi also records the importance of betel-leaves, and remarks that the breath of betel-chewers has an agreeable odour.[2] In this connection Al-Biruni says, "They have red teeth in consequence of chewing areca-nuts with betel-leaves and chalk."[3] He also mentions of betel-leaves which were used for removing bad odour from the mouth as well as for digestion." The hot betels inflame the heat of the body, the chalk on the betel-leaves dries up every thing wet and the betel-nut acts as an astringent on the teeth, gums, and the stomach."[4] At another place he writes that on the festive occasion of Divali people make presents to each other of betel-leaves and areca-nuts.[5] In the Mānasollāsa, various ingredients which were used with betel-leaves are mentioned. They were areca-nuts, camphor, musk and cardamoms.[6] The Upamitibhavaprapañcakahā refers to the pañcasugandhika-tāmbūla, i.e., the betel-leaves with five scented things, namely cardamom, clove, camphor, nutmeg and mace.[7] Chewing the betel-leave with a piece of camphor was popular among men as well as women.[8] Contemporary inscriptions refer to the betel-leaves[9] and betel-nuts.[10] In the Chachnama it is mentioned that when Dahar was fighting with Kasim, two maid-servants were sitting with him in the litter, one of whom was handing over arrows to him one by one and the other was giving him betel-leaves to chew.[11] Somadeva mentions the Gauḍa soldiers' habit of chewing betel-leaves whose mouths were tinged red with betel.[1] Chewing betel-leaves with some ingredients after meal was common, as it was believed that it added digestion.[2] In royal places there ware tāmbūlavāhinīs, i.e., female bearers of betel and even an officer-in-charge of tāmbūla.[3] This gives credibility to the Chachnama's account that Dahar was offered betel-leaves by a maid-servant in the battle field.[4] Generally the maid-servants prepared the tāmbūla[5] in rich families. Vātsyāyana mentions the seller of betel-leaves as tāmbūlika.[6]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 134.

[2] *Chachnama*, p. 184; Elliot, I, p. 200.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid, p. 199.

[6] *Viṣṇu Dharma Purāṇa*, III.233. 28; Cf. *Gaut.* IX.4.

[7] *Vṛddha Hārīta*, VIII.267; *Śukra*, III.109.

[8] *Yaśastilaka*, III.45.64.329.

[9] *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, VII.14.8.

[10] In the *Naiṣadhacarita* it is recorded that after a grand dinner the bridegroom's party was served with betel-leaves (XVI.110).

[11] Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, p.* 222.

[12] Shahriyar, p. 147.

[13] Masudi, II, pp. 83-84.

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[1] Ibid, Cf. Shahriyar, p. 147.

[2] Ferrand, *Textes Geographiques*, I, P. 179.; Nadvi, p. 67.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 179.

[4] Ibid, II, p. 152.

[5] Ibid, II, p. 182.

[6] *Mānasollāsa*, II, vv. 972-73, p. 84.

[7] *Upamiti*, V.419.

[8] *Tilakamañjarī* of Dhanpāla, p. 130.

[9] *JOHRS*, I, p. 301 (*Liṅgarāja temple Inscription*); Cf. *Naiṣadhacarita*, XVI.110; *Rāj.* IV.427; V.365, VII, 544, 789, 945, 1067.

[10] *Memoirs of the ASIR*, I, p. 90.

[11] *Chachnama*, pp. 134, 135, 141.

Drinking Habits

As regards drinking of wine, it was never favoured in ancient India, though the practice was not so uncommon. The law-givers are generally not favourable to drinking. Bhaṭṭa Bhavadeva does not recommend its use for all classes of people.[7] This attitude of abstention is generally praised by the Muslim writers, who are unanimous in observing that the Hindus as a people were not addicted to drink. We are informed by Sulayman that the people of Hind "drink no wine or vinegar, because it is made of wine and yet they abstain not therefrom as a religious duty but for another reason. They say that if a king is given to wine, he ought not to be deemed a king, for add they, as there are frequent wars with the neighbouring states, how should a drunkard manage the affairs of his kingdom ?"[8] Masudi agrees with

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1. *Yaśastilaka Campū* (ed. N.S.P.), III, pp. 464.
2. *Samaraiccakahā*, p. 80; Cf. *Kuṭṭanīmatam*, *KSS*, VI, p. 23, VII, p. 74, VIII, p. 4; *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, X.38; Al-Biruni, II, p. 152.
3. *Kādambāri*, p. 123; *Mānasollāsa*, II, p. 83, v. 959.
4. According to *Tarika Maasum* and *Tuhfatulkiram*, one of the maid servants was giving Dahar betel-leaf and other a cup of wine (*Chachnama*, fn. p. 135).
5. *Deśīnāmamālā*, IV.42.
6. H.S. Chakldar, *Social Life in Ancient India*, p. 103; Cf. *EI*,. I, p. 174; II, p. 5. Tāmbūlikas had their own guilds (*EI*, **XI**, p. 43). Betel-leaves and nuts were also used in worshipping the deities *EI*., **XI**, p. 57. This confirms its popular use in the society (*JASB*, No. 4, 1897, p. 289.).
7. *Prāyaścitaprakaraṇam*, p. 40 ff.
8. Sulayman, p. 33, *Akhbar*, p. 23; Elliot, I, p. 7; Nainar, p. 101.

Sulayman in saying that "the people of Hind abstain from liquors not in obedience to religious precepts, but because they do not choose to take a thing which overwhelms their reason and destroys the supremacy which this faculty should exercise over men. If it can be proved of one of their kings that he has drunk wine he forfeits the crown for he is not considered fit to rule and govern the kingdom if he is given to such habits."[1] Al-Idrisi remarks that the Brāhmaṇas never drank wine nor fermented liquors.[2] We are told by Mutahhar that drinking of wine was considered illegal for the Brāhmaṇas.[3] Ibn Khurradadhbih observes that the kings and the inhabitants of Hind regarded drinking as unlawful and fornication lawful. "This opinion prevails throughout Hind, but the king of Kumar holds both fornication and the use of wine as unlawful. The king of Sarandib conveys wine from Irak for his consumption."[4] Marvazi also records that none of the kings of India indulged in wine-drinking with the exception of the king of Sarandib (Ceylon) "who drinks without respite and wine is brought to him from the Arabian lands."[5] Ibn Rusta also quotes Abu Abdullah Muhammed Ibn Ishaq,[6] who says that the king of Kumar punished with execution those who committed the offence of wine-drinking and adultery. "None of the kings of India," says Ibn Rusta "in whose company I have been and with whom I have had commercial dealings is wasteful on wine-drinking with the exception of the king of al-Bahl (Maldivas) who, so I have been informed, does drink. He is the king of Sarandib (Ceylon). Wine is imported for him from the Arabian lands and he drinks it. I have found Indian merchants, one and all, abstaining from wine drinking. They have it neither in small quantities nor in large. From amongst the (various)

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1. Masudi, I, pp. 168-69, 170; Elliot, I, p. 20; Nainar, p. 102.
2. Idrisi, p. 37; Elliot, I, p. 76.
3. Mutahhar, IV, p. 12,
4. Elliot, I, p. 13.
5. Marvazi, p. 46 (44).
6. He was one of the early sources of information on India. *He* spent two years in Khmer. No information is available about this traveller from any other source. (Cf. *Hudud*, p. 236; Marvazi, p. 153.).

drinks, vinegar is (extracted) from cooked-rice, which is fermented until it turns as sour as the vinegar (itself).[1] If they come across a Muslim drinking wine, they consider him to be a mean (person) and do not pay much heed to him. They think he is of a low (status) and pass such remarks about him as this man must have no respect in his homeland."[2] From the above description it appears that Indians generally abstained from drinks, which were forbidden by their religion as well as by law.

In actual practice, however, drinking was not uncommon. We are told by Ibn Khurradadhbih and Idrisi that the Kṣatriyas could drink upto three bowls of wine only and did not drink immoderately, fearing that they could lose their senses.[3] Al-Biruni remarks that the Śūdras could drink wine but dared not sell it, just as they were not allowed to sell meat.[4] At another place he writes, "They drink wine before having eaten any thing, then they take their meals."[5] Al-Biruni thus makes two different observations. From the first it appears that the Dvijātis were not allowed to drink wine, and only the Śūdres drank. According to the law-givers, drinking is forbidden to the twice-born. The verses of Manu are frequently quoted in the digests and commentaries in support of prohibition. "Surā is the filthy refuse of food and sin indeed is called mala (filth) therefore a Brāhmaṇa, a Rājanya and a Vaiśya should not drink Surā which is of three kinds, viz. prepared from molasses, from flour (or ground grains) and flowers of Madhūka tree, the Brāhmaṇa should not drink any one of these."[6] This indicates that intoxicants were forbidden to the twice-born but the Śūdras were excepted. Generally speaking, the Brāhmaṇas did not drink wine. According to

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1. Speaking of the Chinese Merchant, Sulayman says, " From rice is made vinegar wine, sweet and similar things." (Sauvaget, *Relations*, *Text*, p. 11).
2. Ibn Rusta, *Text*, p. 132 (Tr. pp. 49-50); Cf. Idrisi, p. 29.
3. Elliot, I, pp. 16, 76; Idrisi, p. 37.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 152.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.
6. *Manu.*, XI.93-94; Cf. *Viśwarūpa* on *Yāj.*, III.222, Mit. on *Yāj.*, III, 253; *Aparārka*, p. 1069.

Medhātithi, a Brāhmaṇa who drank Surā extracted from molasses, grains and grapes had to undergo corporal punishment. He also forbids wine distilled from grain for both the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas.[1] The Arab writers say that while the Brāhmaṇas abstained from drinking the Kṣatriyas could drink moderately. The Jodhapur inscription tells us that the Pratihāra king Hariścandra married two wives—one Brāhmaṇa girl and the second Kṣatriya named Bhadrā. The sons born to the Kṣatriya lady have been described as wine-drinkers.[2] From this one may infer that the Kṣatriyas drank wine. Lakṣmīdhara, however, does not permit the Brāhmaṇa to drink spirituous liquors made from *gur* or fermented rice or honey, but he allows wine to the Kṣatriyas and the Vaiśyas.[3] Caṇḍeśvara also agrees with Lakṣmīdhara.[4] But according to the Mānasollāsa, a king was not permitted to drink, but on certain occasions, such as marriages, ceremonies etc., they could entertain the ladies of the harem as well with wine. We learn from the Vīsaladeva Rāso that wine was served, perhaps, in limited quantity to guests and others.[5] This supports the observations of Ibn Khurradadhbih and Idrisi that the Kṣatriyas did not drink more than three cups of wine. It may be noted that Śukra also allows moderate drinking on grounds that "it develops talent, sharpens intelligence, increases patience and makes a mind steady."[6] Drinking was quite popular in Kashmir.[7] There are references to women drinking wine. We are told by Al-Masudi that the people of Hind sometimes made girls drink so that the beholder may be inspired with gaiety by their merriments.[8] Shahriyar interestingly remarks that in the Hindu religion wine was prohibited for men but allowed for women.[9] The

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1. On *Manu*, XI.97.
2. *EI*, XVIII, p. 95.
3. *Niyata* (*KKT*), p. 331.
4. *Gṛhastharatnākara*, p. 394.
5. *Vīsaladeva Rāso*, IV.18.
6. *Śukra*, I, 116-117.
7. *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, 450-53; *Rāj*. VIII.1863, 66-67.
8. Nainar, p. 102.
9. Shahriyar, p. 216.

Chachnama mentions that king Drohar Rai used to drink liquor in the company of women and that his sister also drank wine.[1] In literary works, there are references to drinking by women.[2] Bāṇa speaks of 'clanking ornaments of wine-flushed beauties' and of women their mouth full of wine.[3] Medhātithi allows non-Brāhmaṇa ladies to take wine on festive occasions.[4] Śukra says that the women of Northern India drank wine.[5] If we accept the testimony of the Śṛṅgāramañjarīkathā, drinking was not unknown to the Brāhmaṇas and women of Malwa.[6] Hemacandra informs us that queen Mayaṇalladevī stopped drinking when Siddharāja was in her womb.[7] Bilhaṇa depicts the heroine as madhupāna raktama, i.e., her face "glowing (ruddy) by drink" during sexual sport.[8] The Gwalior inscription of the Pratihāra dynasty says that women of the family tasted wine and became merry.[9] Though women also indulged in drinking, it was not looked upon favourably in their case. Manu emphatically says that libations of water shall not be offered to women who drink spirituous liquor.[10]

Various kinds of wine and liquor were made in this period. We have references to paiṣṭī, gauḍī, mādhvī, medake, āsava and madhu.[11] Sulayman and Ibn Rusta have mentioned wine made of rice,[1] probably medaka from rice. The most common wine or liquor was toddy. Sulayman calls it coconut wine.[2] In Tanjore, wine was also made from honey cooked with cardamom. According to Al-Idrisi, a quantity of this wine, sufficient for a whole company of men, was available at half dirham.[3] The wine made from honey was called mādhvī. The Kalacuri record of Jaya Singh mentions the drinking of toddy by the people in general. It mentions palm-juice as 'Rasavatī.[4] In Bengal coconut trees were (as are in modern times) intensively cultivated[5] and it is probable that juice was taken by the people. According to Caryāpada, some liquor was sold by women,[6] which indicates that palm-juice was commonly consumed. It is thus clear that some kinds of intoxicating drinks were taken, though most of the law-givers do not approve of drinking. Manu disapproves of it for the people of the three upper classes.[7] Bṛhadyama prescribes homa and Prāyaścitta for those Brāhmaṇas who drink wine.[8] Atri and Śaṁkha recommend Prāyaścitta as well as Vrata for days together.[9] It was considered a great sin if the Brāhmaṇa drank wine. King Kumārapāla prohibited not only drinking but also the manufacture of wine jars in Gujarat.[10] We have already said that the Kṣatriyas were not total abstainers like the Brāhmaṇas. The Vaiśyas generally abstained from drinking though there must have been some exceptions.[11] The Śūdras could drink wine but not sell it. The Kalikā Purāṇa, quoted in the Gṛhastharatnākara of Caṇḍeśvara, allows the Śūdra to sell all commodities except

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[1] *Chachnama*, pp. 182, 184.

[2] *KSS*, XXI.68, XXXV.109-110, XXXVI, 9-90, XXXIX.207 etc.

[3] *Harṣacarita*, III, p. 97, IV. p. 130; *Kādambarī*, p. 117; Cf. *Ratnāvalī*, Act. III, v. 13; *Nāgānanda*, Act. III, p. 109.

[4] *On Manu.*, IX.84.

[5] *Śukra* (Eng. Tr.), p. 187.

[6] P. Bhatiya, *Parmaras*, p. 289. According to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, even the Brāhamaṇa women of Ahicchatra and Mathurā used to drink wine (*Tantravārttika*, Eng. Tr., p. 194).

[7] *Dvyāśrayakāvya*, I.13.

[8] *Chaurapanchasika*, v. 9.

[9] *EI*, XVIII, p. 108.

[10] *Manu*. V.90; Cf. *Yāj*. III.256; *Vas. Dh.S.*, 21.11; *Vijñāneśvara* quotes a text, as saying that half of the body of him whose wife drinks surā is guilty of grave sin. *Mit* on *Yāj*. I, 73; (*Parāśara* X.26; *Vas.Dh.S.* 21.15).

[11] B.P. Majumdar, *Socio Economic History*, pp. 260-261; V. Upadhyay, *Socio Religious Condition of Northern India*, pp. 173-175.

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1. Sulayman (*Akhbar*), p. 8; Ibn Rusta (Tr.), p. 49.
2. Sulayman (*Akhbar*), p. 8.
3. Idrisi, p. 29.
4. *EI*, XXI, p. 95.
5. Ibid, XV, p. 284.
6. *Journal of the Dept. of Letters*, XXX, p. 6.
7. *Manu* , XI.93-94; Intoxicants were not forbidden to the Śūdras. (Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 796.).
8. *Bṛhadyama*, II.3; Cf. *Manu*., XI.94; *Gaut*., II.25.
9. *Atri*, 61; *Śaṁkha*, 17.43; Cf. *Manu* , XI.54; *Yāj* , III,227.
10 Hemacandra, *Mahāvīracarita*, V.98.
11. *Śukra*, I.116-117; *Niyata* (KKT), p. 331.

honey, skins, lac, wines and flesh.[1] Parāśara prohibits the Śūdra from selling wine and flesh.[2] From the evidence of Śaṁkha[3] and Siyadoni[4] records it appears that a section of the Vaiśya class used to trade in liquor. It was called Kallapāla (modern Kalawār) a sub-caste of the Vaiśyas. A levy of tax was recommended on the liquor trade.[5] As this trade was not considered respectable, Śaṁkha prescribes Vrata for it.[6] Probably the Kallapālas gave up the business and it was taken up by the Pulakasa (modern Pāsi) caste.[7] The modern Pāsis sell wines and toddy.

We may conclude by saying that drinking of wine was not looked upon with favour in society. Religious laws had prohibited its use and the kings also discouraged it. Nevertheless in certain sections of the population, specially among the Kṣatriyas, drinks were taken. Among the king's ten vices, mentioned by Manu, drinking has been regarded as most pernicious.[8] The question is how many abstained from it? It is in the royal families in which the vice was most prevalent.

Dress

Cotton, woollens and silks which the people put on in the reign of Harṣa, continued to be used in the period. In the matter of dress, the people were generally frugal and preferred white garments to those of mixed colour or ornamented clothes.[9] The usual dress consisted of Dhoti, Uttarīya and turban or cap. "Men wind their garments round their middle, then gather them under armpits and let them fall down across the body, hanging to the right." "The robes of women fall down to the ground, they completely cover their shoulders. They wear a little knot of hair on their crowns, and let the rest of their hair fall loose."[1] The Uttarīya or the second or upper piece of cloth seems to have been used by both men and women.[2] Rājaśekhara describes the dress of the women of Kanauj as follows, "With ear-rings dancing on the cheeks and with the long necklace moving down to the navel, the dress of the women of Kanauj deserves to be honoured, their upper cloth going completely round the waist down to the anklet."[3] He further informs us that the ladies of his time used bodice.[4] But with the Muslim occupation of Sind, Indian dress also changed. Muslim dresses became very common among the people of Sind, Multan and Mansura. According to Ibn Hauqal, al-Istakhri, al-Maqdisi and al-Idrisi the people of Sind dressed themselves in the Iraqi fashion, while the dress of their kings resembled that of the kings of India in respect of the hair and the tunic.'[5] Writing about the people of Cambay to Saimur, Ibn Hauqal says that the Hindus and the Muslims wore the same dress and let their beards grow in the same fashion.[6] The dress of the people of the gulf of Cambay and the Malabar coast, according to him, included 'izr and mizr' after the fashion of Muslims who had settled there. Dr. Moti Chandra thinks that the men wore shorts and jackets.[7] But Dr. A.K. Majumdar does not agree with Dr. Moti Chandra, being of the view that people had been using those two articles of dress long before the Muslim settlements.[8] He bases his argument on the authority of the coins of Candragupta I which show him wearing a close-fitted coat and short trousers.[9] The author of the Hudud Al-Alam mentions, 'Izar, which was worn by the people of Cambay in all seasons and they had long hair.'[1] The dress of the people of Makran consisted of short tunics, but the merchants wore shirts and cloaks of cotton like the men of Iraq and Persia.[2] Idrisi adds, "The common people wear the Iraqi costume while their kings resemble the kings of India in wearing tunics and in having loag hair."[3] Turbans were generally worn by the people.[4] Among the various types of Indian dresses Al-Biruni writes, "They use turbans for trousers. Those who want little dress, are content to dress in a rag of two fingers breadth, which they bind over their loins with two cords; but those who like much dress, wear trousers lined with so much cotton as would suffice to make a number of counterpanes and saddle-rugs. These trousers have no (visible) openings, and they are so huge that the feet are not visible. The string by which the trousers are fastened is at the back. Their *sidar* (a piece of dress covering the head and the upper part of breast and neck) is similar to the trousers, being also fastened at the back by buttons. The lappets of the Kurtakas (short shirts from the shoulders to the middle of the body with sleeves, a female dress) have slashes both on the right and left side."[5] In short, the dresses described by Al-Biruni consisted of dhoti, langot, trousers, sidar and brassiere, a female dress.[6] The Indians in olden days, Al-Biruni writes, wore no clothes (meaning thereby few) because 'in consequence of the heat, and by not cutting the hair of head they intended to prevent sun stroke.'[7] Ibn Hauqal says that the people of the land of Balhara, used fine muslin garments on account of extreme heat. The men of Multan dressed in the same way.[8] Fine clothes of silk were used, especially by the rich section of the society. We have references to silken clothes in the Chachnama and other Muslim writings.[1] Sulayman observes that a dress of fine muslin could be passed through a signet ring.[2] Masudi also confirms it and says that in the kingdom of Rahma (Palas of Bengal), people manufactured 'a very fine and delicate variety of cloth, which is not found in any other country.'[3] Hsuan Tsang also mentions muslin and silk among the clothing materials.[4] As regards men's dress, the loin cloth was universally used. We are informed by the Chachnama that Chach forced the Jats to wear the under-garments of woollen cloth.[5] Al-Biruni also says that those who wanted little dress were 'content to dress in a rag of two fingers' which they bound over their loins with two cords.[6] Loin cloth was more popular among the Bikour (Sadhus) in general.[7] Curiously enough the Muslim writers do not mention 'Sārī', the most famous and universal dress of Indian women. We have numerous references to Sārī worn by women. The priest used white and clean garments while performing rites in the temples.[8] Scarves were also in use.[9]

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[1] Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 400.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, II, Ch. XXII.

[3] *Śaṁkha Smṛti*, Ch. 17.

[4] *EI*, I, p. 174.

[5] Ibid, p. 174, XIV, p. 298.

[6] *Śaṁkha*, 17.58-59.

[7] *Auśanasa Smṛti*, 17.

[8] *Manu.*, VII.48-52; Cf. *Kautilya*, VIII.3; *Gaut.*, XII.38; *Yāj.* II.47; Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 798-99.

[9] Watters, I, p, 148.

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[1] Beal, I, p. 75.

[2] *Karpūramañjarī* (ed. Durga Prasad), p. 106.

[3] *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* (ed. C.D. Dalal), p. 8.

[4] *Karpūramañjarī* (ed. Ghosh), p. 5.

[5] Elliot, I, pp. 27, 39; Idrisi, p. 43.

[6] Elliot, I, p 39.

[7] Moti Chandra, *Jain Miniature Paintings from Western India*, p. 120.

[8] A.K. Majumdar, *Chaulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 356.

[9] Allen, *Catalogue of Gupta Coins*, p. 43.

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[1] *Hudud*, p. 88.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 39.

[3] Idrisi, pp. 43-48; Cf, Elliot, I, p. 78; Jaubert, I, p. 162.

[4] *Chachnama*, p. 97; *Hudud*, 89; Baladhuri (*Eng. Tr.*), p. 213.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 180-181.

[6] *Mānasollāsa*, II, 201, *Deśīnāmamālā*, II, 93 also mentions Kancukas (brassiers) as female dress.

[7] Al-Biruni, I, p. 179.

[8] Elliot, I, p. 39.

Both among the male and female, wearing of the clothes below the navel was common. The clothing of the people was made of silk, muslin, linen and fine wool. These clothes were exported from India to the countries of West Asia.[10]

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[1] *Chachnama*, pp. 37, 97; Utbi (Tr. Reynolds), p. 342; Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 207; Utbi (Sharma), p. 46; Rājaśekhara refers to Cināṁśuka (Chinas Silk), *Viddhaśālabhañjikā*, III, p. 101.

[2] Sulayman, (*Akhbar*), pp. 13, 53.

[3] Masudi, I, p. 388.

[4] Watters, I, p. 148.

[5] *Chachnama*, p. 37.

[6] Al-Biruni, I, p. 179.

[7] "In summer they go about scantily clothed with bare feet, only covering their nakedness with some rag or other, which is now and then, a mere scrap of stuff, four fingers broad, tied to the girdle by a string and thence falling over their secret parts. In winter they clothe themselves with grass. Some of them wear an izar, made up of a patchwork of bits and pieces of every colour."–(Shahriyar, p. 132.).

[8] Marvazi, p. 49 (54); Ibn Rusta, p. 55.

[9] *Chachnama*, p. 37.

[10] Nadvi, pp. 54-58.

Washing of the clothes was also popular. According to Sulayman there were ten to fifteen thousand men in the army of the Ruhmi kingdom who were employed in fulling and washing of clothes.[1]

Ornaments

The people were fond of ornaments, though we get scanty information about them in the Muslim accounts of this period. They do not mention all the ornaments which are generally found in literary works. Sulayman says that both men and women wore bracelets of gold and jewels.[2] Abu Zayd describes the unusual but interesting habits of the Indian kings and nobles, who wore gold ear-rings, studded with precious stones and fine necklaces of rubies and emeralds.[3] Actually both men and women wore two ear-rings and gold bracelets.[4] To quote Al-Biruni, "The men wear articles of female dress. They use cosmetics, wear ear-rings, arm-rings, golden seal-rings on the ring-finger as well as on the toes of the feet."[5] About the dress and ornaments of women, Al-Idrisi mentions that the hundred girls who accompanied king Ballaha were dressed in qaratiq (long Blouse), embellished with gold and adorned with most beautiful ornaments wearing bracelets of gold and silver around their head and feet.[6] The Chachnama also mentions that seven hundred beautiful temple females were captured by Kasim with their valuable ornaments and clothes, adorned with jewels.[7] A list of fourteen conventional ornaments of women, including tilaka, is given by Hemacandra.[8] Rājaśekhara mentions girdle, anklets, kuṇḍala, necklace and bracelets[9] among ornaments. Ornaments of pearls were prized

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1. Sulayman, p. 17; Elliot, I, p. 5.
2. Sulayman, p. 39; Nainar, p. 96.
3. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 98; *Hindustan*, I, p. 68.
4. Ibn ul-Faqah, p. 15; Nainar, 96.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.
6. Idrisi, pp. 59-60.
7. *Chachnama*, p 84.
8. Hemacandra, *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*, I.229, Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 359; Cf. *Harṣacarita*, I, pp. 31-32.
9. *Karpūramañjari*, pp. 20, 23, 50, 75, 49.

most, as Abu Zayd records, "pearls are what they most esteem, and their value surpasses that of all other jewels, they at present hoard them up in their treasures with their most precious things."[1] The kings' love for ornaments is also recorded by Marvazi, who writes, "All the kings of India wear adornments, jewels necklaces, bracelets and double baldrics covered with pearls."[2] As regards the wearing of ornaments by men, we have references to it in the Kathāsaritasāgara,[3] the Rājataraṅgiṇī,[4] the Pṛthvīrājavijaya,[5] Kṣemendra[6] and Mānasollāsa.[7] The Kādambarī[8] and Hsuan Tsang[9] mention diadems, necklaces and bracelets as ornaments that were worn by men of high ranks. Al-Utbi records that when Mahmud defeated Jaipal in 1001 A.D., a great deal of booty was seized. "It is said that the necklace that Jaipal was wearing was valued 1,80,000 dinars. Similarly other Hindu chiefs, who were taken prisoners, were found wearing valuable ornaments round their necks."[10] Gardizi also confirms it, "The necklace of Jaipal made of studded pearls, precious jewels and red rubies, was taken off his neck. Its value was estimated as two lacs of dinars."[11] Firishta corroborates the statements of Utbi and Gardizi and adds that sixteen necklaces were captured by Sultan Mahmud after his victory over Jaipal.[12] Necklace seems to have been a popular ornament with men. Al-Idrisi speaks about Balhara of Naharwara, who wore a crown of gold on his head and was dressed in robes woven in gold.[12]

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1. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 98, *Hindustan*, I, p. 68.
2. Marvazi, p. 49 (56).
3. *KSS*, XXIV.9, XXXVI.111, XXXIII.211, XXIV.219 etc.
4. *Rāj*, IV.69, V.341-47, VII.749, 782-86 etc.
5. *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, II.17-30.
6. *Daśāvatāracaritam*, *Buddhāvatāra*, vv. 33, 62, 68.
7. *Mānasollāsa*, III, 1585-1589;
8. *Kādambarī* (Eng. Tr.), pp. 7-12.
9. Beal, II, p. 134.
10. Utbi (Tr. Sharma), p. 23; Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 87.
11. Gardizi. (Tr. Sharma), p. 38; Nazim, *op.cit.*, p. 87.
12. Firishta, I, p. 38,
13. Idrisi, p. 59.

The kings had pierced ears,[1] which apart from religious considerations, were intended to hold costly ear-rings. It may be noted that piercing of the ears was a religious ceremony among the Hindus. Sulayman, Abu-Zayd, Ibn Khurradadhbih and Ibn-ul-Faqah have mentioned this.[2]

Use of Shoes and Umbrellas

Early Muslim writers provide scanty information about the use of shoes and umbrellas. The Chachnama says that Chach forced the Jats to walk bare-footed.[3] The Hudud al-Alam mentions that the Muslim inhabitants of Sind wore shoes (na'lain), because the leather, skins and shoes were the products of the country.[4] Writing about the custom of wearing shoes by the Hindus, Al-Biruni says, "They keep the shoes tight till they begin to put them on. They are turned down from the calf before walking (?)."[5] We are informed by the Vīsaladeva Rāso that shoes of different designs and colours were used by the people.[6] Besides leather-shoes[7] sometimes shoes having steel soles and floral decorations outside were also used.[8] Peacock-shoes (mayūropanah) were quite in fashion.[9] The use of wooden sandals was also in vogue.[10] Even "a slave-girl would think it necessary to include a pair of sandals as a part of her minimum requirements."[11] Thus shoes formed an important part of the dress. Abu Zayd records that kings used umbrellas made of peacock feathers.[12]

Hair-dressing

According to Ibn Hauqal, al-Istakhri, al-Maqdisi, and al-

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1. Marvazi, p. 48 (52).
2. Nainar, p, 96,
3. *Chachnama*, p. 37.
4. *Hudud*, p. 122.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.
6. *Vīsaladeva Rāso*, I.35, III.34-35,
7. *Rāj*., VIII.137.
8. *Kuṭṭanīmatakāvya*, v. 64.
9. *Deśopadeśa*, VI.
10. *Narmamālā*, I.170.
11. Majumdar, *Caulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 358.
12. *Hindustan*, I, pp. 68-69.

Idrisi, the people of al-Mansura (Sind) grew their hair long like the Indian kings.[1] Al-Biruni remarks that the Hindus did not cut any of the hair of the body. Originally they went naked in consequence of the heat, and by not cutting the hair of the head they intended to prevent sun stroke.[2] According to the writer of Hudud al-Alam, the people of Samur, Sindan, Subara and Kanbaya had long hair (muj-i-furu-hishta).[3] Among the men it was a fashion to have long beards and plaited moustaches. Sulayman writes that the people of Hind wore a long beard. "I have seen some with a beard three cubits in length. They do not cut their moustaches."[4] Ibn ul-Faqah furnishes the same information, without mentioning moustaches.[5] Sulayman further informs us that the hair of the head and the beard of the dead person were shaved off.[6] The mention of long hair and the habit of keeping long beard seems to have reference to ascetics. Even in modern days they have retained the old practice. About long moustaches Al-Biruni writes, "They divide the moustache into single plaits in order to preserve it."[7] No doubt military officers in ancient India were allowed to grow beards and even wore whiskers. We may quote from Bāṇa, a description of the commander-in-chief of Thāṇeśvara, "With tangled hair on the head, his cheeks covered with white bunches of whiskers and with his long white beard falling on his breast, as if fanning his master seated in the heart, though dead, with a camara."[1]

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[1] Elliot, I, pp. 39, 27; *Indo Arab Relations*, p 121; Idrisi, p. 43.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 179.

[3] *Hudud*, p 88. But the people of B-Ksan "shave (bisuturand) their hair and beards" (Hudud, p. 88). The followers of the Bikur sects "shave their heads pluck out their beards and moustaches but keep their pubic hair and the hair of their armpits" (Shahriyar, pp. 132-33.). Cf. Al-Biruni, I, p. 180. "The pilgrims of the Sun temple of Multan shaved their heads to acquire the favour of the deity" (Ibn Rusta (Tr.), p. 54.)

[4] Sulayman, p. 35; *Akhbar*, p. 24.

[5] Ibn ul Faqah, p. 14; Nainar, p. 97.

[6] Sulayman, p. 35; *Akhbar*, p. 24. "People shaved their hair and beards after the death of the king" (*Chachnama*, p. 164.). "The Indians upon the death of relation shave both head and face" (Sulayman, p. 35.)

[7] Al-Biruni, I, p. 80.

The people of Qandahar, according to Al-Idrisi, kept unusually long beards reaching to their knees and even beyond. "It is wide and very hairy. They have round faces. It is proverbial to talk of their huge and long beards."[2] Ibn ul-Faqah observes that the Indians (men) had pig tails.[3] From sculptures of the early medieval period, we get some idea of the hair-style of males. Generally, curly hairs are seen falling lower down.[4] Kings and nobles braided their hair in various styles.[5] These evidences are, however, not sufficient to prove that the people in general grew beards and moustaches. Very few illustrations of moustaches have been found in early medieval sculptures. In western India they were introduced by foreigners.[6]

From the very beginning the women used to dress their hair gracefully. We have numerous styles of hair dressing in paintings, sculptures and literary sources. But very little information on this aspect is available in the Muslim writings of the early mediaval period. The women of the Laccadive and Maldive Islands, according to al-Idrisi, plaited their hair and embellished them with ten combs made of the shell of the sea-turtle (al-dhabl). They kept their heads uncovered.[7] Ibn Battuta also writes that they did not cover their heads and combed the hair and gathered it on one side.[8] The hair of the women accompanying Ballahara was hanging down over their backs.[9] The inhabitants of one of the islands of Zabaj plaited their hair like the tails of post-horses.[10]

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1. *Harṣacarita*, Ch. VI.
2. Idrisi, p. 66.
3. Ibn ul-Faqah, p. 207.
4. *Early Indian* School *of Medieval Sculpture*, XXXVI (b).
5. *Rāj*. VII.922-924, Cf. *Kuṭṭanīmatam*, vv. 62, 65.
6. Upadhyaya, *Socio Religious Condition of Northern India*, pp. 163-165.
7. Idrisi, p. 25.
8. Ibn Battuta, p. 243; Idrisi, p. 140.
9. Idrisi, p. 59.
10. Marvazi, p. 50 (58).

The most common style of hair-dressing was to tie the hair in a knot on the back behind.[1] According to Rājaśekhara, the ladies of Kerala tied their hair at the top from the roots. In the Avantideśa (the west) the style used was a mixture of northern and southern styles.[2] We are informed by the Sehva Praśati of Mahendra Pāla that his feudatory Pūrṇarāja was 'the cause of the curly hairs of the wives of the enemies becoming straight."[3] Flowers were used to decorate the ears and hair and garlands in the neck.[4] The women of Rājasthān were not behind others in this respect.[5] They wore long hair, braided or knotted, which was always decorated with seasonal flowers in Malwa.[6]

As regards the cutting of nails, Al-Biruni writes, "They let the nails grow long, glorying in their idleness, since they do not use them for any business or work, but only while living a *dolce far niente* life, they scratch their heads with them and examine one hair for lice.'"[7] It is difficult to give credence to this observation, for in ancient times there was a caste of barbers, who were engaged in cutting the hair and nails. However, the Indians have been praised by Muslim writers for their sense of cleanliness.[8] Shahriyar writes that the followers of the Bikour sect 'cut and chew their nails.'[9]

Cosmetics

Aloes used as incense have been mentioned by Muslim writers. They were sent to temples and the priests had a flourishing trade in it. Other incenses that were used comprised camphor, amber, musk, saffron, sandal, etc. Even the priests perfumed themselves before they approached the deities.[1]

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[1] *Early Indian Sculpture of Medieval India*, pl. L (all).

[2] *Karpūramañjarī*, pp. 9, 19.

[3] *EI*, I, p. 246 (v. 16).

[4] *Kathāsaritasāgar*, LXXXV.11, CIV.88, LXXV. 70; *Rāj*. VII.928-931; *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, I *Guccha*, III *Guccha* 23. II *Guccha* 60. VII *Guccha* 1, 211, *Guccha* II. 54.

[5] Sharma, *ECD*, p. 263.

[6] *Śṛṅgāramañjarī Kathā of Bhojadeva*, p. 75, *Prince of Wales Museum Inscription* (11), 59, 61-62, 87.

[7] Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.

[8] Sulayman, p. 36; *Hindustan*, I, p. 203; Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.

[9] Shahriyar, p. 133.

Al-Biruni remarks that the Indian wore articles of female dress and used cosmetics.[2] The Chachnama also mentions the use of cosmetics.[3] We have references to various kinds of cosmetics, which were in use. In an inscription it is recorded that victorious kings deprived the wives of their enemies of the use of vermilion and ointment for lips.[4] Rājaśekhara has mentioned various cosmetics that were used by ladies. The agru perfumes, sandal paste were used by the women of Bengal.[5] Paste of saffron, collyrium, wreaths, flowers, etc. were used by the women of Kanauj.[6] Betel-leaves were taken to remove bad odour. Rati-rahasya contains various recipes for removing bad odour from the mouth and other parts of the body and for beautifying the complexion of men and women.[7] Hsuan Tsang also observes that Indian ladies stained their teeth with red or black objects.[8] To make their teeth red, they must have used betel-leaves. The ladies of Kashmir used camphor, sandal and saffron to toilet and perfume their bodies[9] reddened the feet and lips with lac,[10] and applied collyrium in eyes.[11] We learn from the Pṛthvīrājavijaya that the men and women of Ajmer maintained a high standard of aesthetic taste and that "the perfumed incense burnt by ladies to dry their hair, gathers in thick clouds and hides the moon.... The camphor and musk which drop from the bodies of the citizens in the street make the clothes of the passers-by white-black."[1] The women of Malwa used sandal, camphor, kumkum, rodhra (pollon), collyrium and sometimes they dyed their hair.[2] Oil was also used, though, as Al-Biruni says, its use was forbidden to the Brāhmaṇas in the third stage of life.[3] Scented oils and perfumes were used by men and women.[4] On festive occasions people used cow-dung instead of perfumes, writes Al-Biruni.[5] No doubt, aids of beauty were many.[6]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 49; Ibn Rusta, Tr. p. 55.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.

[3] *Chachnama*, pp. 145, 157.

[4] *EI*, pp. 129, 246; *Bharata Kaumudi*, pt. 1, p. 274.

[5] *Kāvyamīmāṁsā*, p. 8.

[6] *Karpūramañjarī* (ed. Ghosh), p. 27.

[7] *Ratirahasya*, XV. 85-92, 94-101.

[8] Watters, I, p. 151.

[9] *Kuṭṭanīmatam*, v. 7, 101; *Nīlamatapūrāṇa*, v. 550.

[10] *Kuṭṭanīmatam*, vv. 7, 113.

[11] *Rāj.*, VII, 928-931.

Toilette and Personal Hygiene

Personal cleanliness was well observed by the Hindus. Sulayman writes that the Indian, unlike the Chinese, cleaned their teeth with tooth-picks and bathed daily before taking meals.[7] Ibn ul Faqah confirms the statement of Sulayman and says that they took bath and cleaned their teeth before every meal.[8] Al-Jahiz points out that Indians used miswak (tooth-stick) tooth-picks, hair dyes.[9] Shahriyar observes that the Indians bathed in tanks but came out when they had to rinse the mouth.[10] The priests used clean garments and perfumed themselves before going to the idols.[11] The Chachnama also records that people used to take bath before eating.[12] Al-Biruni writes that the Brāhmaṇas bathed three times a day.[13] Hsuan Tsang observes that before taking their meal Indians washed their hands, feet and face,[14] and after meals rinsed

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1. *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, V.153, 179; *JRAS*, 1913, p. 273.
2. P. Bhatia, The *Paramarās*, p. 289.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 133.
4. *Śṛṅgāramañjarīkathā, the ninth tale*
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 181.
6. Sharma, *ECD*, p. 263.
7. Sulayman p. 36.
8. Nainar, p. 98.
9. Al-Jahiz, p. 6.
10. Shahriyar, p. 123.
11. Marvazi, p. 49; Ibn Rusta, p. 55.
12. *Chachnama*, p. 184.
13. *Al-Biruni*. II, p. 131.
14. Watters, I. p. 152; Cf Takakusu, p. 26; *Harṣacarita*, III, p. 159.

their teeth. The Agnipurāṇa lays down many rules relating to bath, the purification of body and the cleansing of teeth.[1]

Amusements

Sulayman remarks that while the Chinese were fond of all kinds of amusements, the Indians disliked amusements and did not cultivate them.[2] This is far from the truth. The Indians had a liking for recreation and amusements, to which we have numerous references in our literature. However, the information provided by the Muslim writers on this subject is very meagre. Hunting, horse-riding, chess, gambling, cock-fighting, bird-catching, dancing, music, magic, festivals etc. were the main means of recreation in ancient India.

Hunting

Hunting was an occupation for the lower classes[3] and a means of amusement for the people of the upper classes. We have references to hunting by kings in the Chachnama.[4] Al-Biruni was highly impressed by the skills displayed by the hunters in pursuing the hunt. "I myself have witnessed that in hunting gazelles they caught them with the hand. One Hindu even went so far, as to assert that he, without catching the gazelle would drive it before him and lead it straight into the kitchen."[5] In the Chachnama it is recorded that Dahar went ahunting with all the animals and all the equipments of the chase. In chasing deer, the dogs, leopards and lynxes were set free and the falcons and hawks flew in the air.[6] There are references to fighting with lions.[7] The Rajput kings loved this game and the horse was the favourite companion in the hunt. As many as twenty one kinds of hunting are described in the Mānasollāsa, which include hunting of deers, rams and leopards.[1] The Vikramāṅkadevacarita mentions in detail the methods of hunting a boar or hare with the help of trained dogs.[2] Hunting was an ancient game of India.[3] It was termed 'mṛgayā vyasana'.[4] Many animals and birds were hunted.[5] The Gupta kings issued coins depicting the scene of hunting,[6] which indicates its popularity among the ruling class.

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[1] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 658.

[2] Sulayman, (Nadvi), p. 103.

[3] Al-Biruni, E, p. 101; Cf. *Hunting of the Elephants*, Idrisi, pp. 69-70.

[4] *Chachnama*, pp. 122, 185-86.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, p. 195.

[6] *Chachnama*, pp. 185-186.

[7] Ibid, p. 186.

Horse-Riding

Referring to horse-riding, Al-Biruni says, "They ride without a saddle, but if they put on a saddle, they mount the horse from its right side. In travelling they like to have some body riding behind them."[7] It seems that the person who rode behind was intended to serve as an escort. Besides, this provided additional security at a time when it was not safe to travel alone. We are told that Chach forced the Jats to ride horses without saddles.[8] Idrisi informs that Ballahara very much liked horse-riding and he was accompanied by women. "They go along sporting with one another and dancing, while the king rides ahead of them."[9] There is no doubt that horse-riding was very popular among the ruling class. The popular type of ohind coin, i.e., "Bull and Horseman type" provides evidence of horse-riding.

Gambling and Chess

Gambling and chess were the favourite indoor games. Al-Idrisi informs us that chess, backgammon and gambling of

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1. *Mānasollāsa*, IV.13, vv. 1330-1725; Cf. *Hammīramahākāvya*, IV.38 f. *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*, III, p. 279.
2. *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, 1298, 1328.
3. *Kautilya*, VIII, 3-5, 41, 42; *Manu*, VIII.50; *Kāmandaka*, 14.7.
4. *Sabhāparva*, 68.20; *Udyogaparva*, 23.92.
5. *Śākuntalam*, Act. II.
6. *JNSI*, XXIV (1962), pp. 154-155.
7. Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.
8. Elliot, I, p. 151.
9. Idrisi, pp. 59-60; Cf. Elliot, I, p. 88 and Nainar, p. 162. "They engage in various games and sham fights."

various kinds were the games of the inhabitants of Sarandip.[1] Abu Zayd also remarks that gambling was the most usual occupation of the inhabitants of Sarandip. They played also at draughts and ventured great sums upon the chance of this game, "but with such fury that those who have not wherewithal debouchees and desperate people often play away the ends of their fingers."[2] He gives a horrible picture of the game, adding they could not shake off this evil habit of gambling.[3] The Chachnama informs us that when the army of Kasim was approaching towards the capital of Dahar, he was engaged in amusements and pleasures, and hunts and games of chess and dice.[4] At another place also the game of chess is mentioned.[5]

Al-Biruni also mentions the game of *nard* (backgammon), which was played by three men with dice.[6] Dice-playing has been referred to in the several passages of the Rājataraṅgiṇī.[7] Gambling, though in vogue, was regarded as a pastime of low type.[8] As the State levied a tax on gambling houses, it must have been a source of some income.[9] Kumārapāla made earnest efforts to stop gambling with dice.[10] Dr. U.N. Goshal on the basis of Maharājaparājaya concludes that there were five varieties of gambling for different sections of the community.[11] Those who were involved in this game were kings, millionaires merchants and even small boys.[12] It was particularly played on the occasion of the worship of Lakṣmī.[13]

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[1] Idrisi, p. 29, mentions that the inhabitants of Ceylon passed most of their time playing backgammon and chess.

[2] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 85; *Akhbar*, p. 40; Cf. Ferrand, *Voyage*, p. 121.

[3] Ibid, p. 85; *Akhbar*, p. 40.

[4] *Chachnama*, p. 122.

[5] Ibid, p. 184.

[6] Al-Biruni, I, p. 182.

[7] *Rāj.*, VII.1003, VIII.1740.

[8] Ibid, VIII.2360; It is prohibited by the Smṛtis. *Manu*, IX.220.

[9] *EI*, XIV, p. 302, v. 75.

[10] *Mahāvīracarita*, v. 73; Cf. A.K. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 361.

[11] R.C. Majumdar, (ed.) *Struggle for Empire*, pp. 489-90; Cf. *Maharājaparājaya*, Act. IV, pp. 86-87.

[12] Ibid.

[13] *Niyata*, (KKT.), p. 422; *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, vv. 401-407.

As regards chess, India can claim to be the originator of this game. Masudi observes that during the rule of Balhit (Narasimha Bālāditya of the Gupta Dynasty ?)[1] chess was invented. He preferred it to backgammon. During this period the game of chess reached its high water-mark.[2] Yaqubi also records that a Brāhmaṇa invented chess during the reign of Balhit.[3] However, it required mental skill and was somewhat like the modern game of pachisi,[4] as it was played by four persons with a pair of dice. Al-Biruni gives a figure of the chessboard and the rules of the play from which it would appear that it was a different game from the modern pachisi. The description of the chess is interesting. Al-Biruni says, "They play chess—four persons at a time—with a pair of dice."[5] The chess was the Indian indoor game. It is said in the Shahnama that a special embassy came from Kanauj to present the Persian king with a chess.[6] Its modern name 'Śatarañja' is a corrupt form of 'Caturaṅga'--four parts of the army—infantry, cavalry, elephants and chariot.[7] Al-Biruni includes king, pawn, horse, elephant, tower (rukh), i.e., chariot among the figures on the chess board.[8]

Bird-Catching and Cock-Fighting

As regards catching of birds, Al-Biruni says, "The shooters of kata-birds have a custom af beating copper-vessels during the night with one and the same kind of beat and they manage to catch them with the hand If, however, the beat is changed, the birds fly off in all the directions."[9] Shahriyar gives another interesting way of catching the birds. He

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1. Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 138; *Masudi Commemoration Volume*, pp. 103-104, and note 3.
2. Masudi, I, p. 159.
3. Al-Yaqubi, I, pp. 102-105.
4. *Islamic Culture*, (1930), p. 103.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 183.
6. *JARS*, (1898), p. 122.
7. *Adiparva*, 69.4; *EI*, II, p. 3.
8. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 183, 407.
9. Al-Biruni, I, p. 195.

writes that in India there were charmers "Such as one of these charmers will go out into the country and catching sight of some birds high up in the air, trace a circle beneath them. The birds fly about over the circle for a while, but presently tumble down in it, and then they stay. Then the charmer enters his circle, takes the birds he wants and lets the others go. Likewise, he sees animals pasturing on the plain, compasses them from a distance with a line, walks round them, without their any of them being able to escape and entering takes when he pleases."[1] No doubt there were many methods of catching birds. The Vikramāṅkadevacarita informs us that trained hawks were used in catching birds, "the hawk seized them on the wing at a height invisible to the naked eyes."[2] Mānasollāsa also mentions hawking as one of the amusements.'[3]

Cock-fightiug also provided entertainment to the people. Abu Zayd writes that it was a popular pastime among the inhabitants of Ceylon. People bet gold, silver, lands and many other things, which were won by the owner of the cock.[4] Marvazi also mentions cock-fighting, adding that the king of the country of Zabaj daily received fifty maunds of gold from cock-fighting, "for this (sport) is common in his kingdom"[5] The fights of birds, elephants, cocks, rams, buffaloes, quails are referred to in the Mānasollāsa. Cock-fight was called tāmrachūḍavinoda.[6] Hemacandra gives a graphic description of a cock-fight in his Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarit,[7] which was enjoyed by the Caulukya king and his queen. Probably Hemacandra, who had a dislike for cock-fight, recommended its prohibition to Kumārapāla,[8] There is no doubt that it was one of the popular means of amusement.

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[1] Shahriyar, p. 89 ff.

[2] *Vikramāṅkadevacarita*, 1329–1380.

[3] *Mānasollāsa*, Vimśati, IV.10, vv. 997-1276.

[4] Abu Zayd, (*Sup.*), p. 85.

[5] Marvazi, p. 50 (58).

[6] *Mānasollāsa*, IV.11, vv. 1277-1297; *Mahāvīracarita*, v. 74.

[7] *Triṣaṣṭiśalākāpuruṣacarita*, III.279.

[8] A.K. Majumdar, *op.cit.*, p. 361.

Magic and Jugglery

Magicians and jugglers amused people by their performances. Abu Zayd says that the diviners and jugglers performed most astonishing feats.[1] According to Ibn Khurradadhbih and Idrisi, the Lahud or Zakya were a special class of entertainers.[2] Al-Biruni also mentions a class of untouchables, who were called jugglers.[3] The jugglers are naṭas of the Smṛtis.[4] In modern times they are dancers, acrobats and jugglers by profession. In the Surucijātaka the naṭa is described as throwing up a ball of rope and climbing it and performing other tricks of jugglery.[5] Al-Biruni refers to the same of the skills and tricks, "Sometimes the Hindus are considered as sorcerers because of their playing with balls on raised beams or on tight ropes, but tricks of this kind are common to all nations."[6] Marvazi mentions a religious sect called Mahadaviya (adepts of Mahādeva), who were experts in magic.[7] Magicians were not lacking among the India.[8] The class of entertainers enjoyed some importance. Rājaśekhara mentions that among those, who were invited to the assembly of poets gathering were rope-dancers (plavaka) and magicians (jambhaka).[9] Snake-charmers were also a source of amusement.[10]

Dancing and Music

Dancing and music also provided recreation to the people. We have already said that the Devadāsis and harlots were skilled in these arts.[11] Dancers thronged in the temple court-yard and the palace of the king.[1] According to Al-Masudi, there were many delightful musical instruments in India which could create emotions of weeping and smiling in the listeners.[2] Marvazi writes, "Here too belongs the science of singing and construction of various musical instruments and the science of dancing in which no one attains to their standards."[3] "(Similarly they excel) in the art of singing and dancing and in the construction of implements of merriment,"[4] writes Gardizi. According to the Nīlamatapurāṇa gīta nṛtya and vādya should take place in some of the religious festivities.[5] Kings were patrons of music and dancing. Caulukya king Someśvara was skilled in fine arts.[6] The Kashmiri Kings were great lovers of music and dancing.[7] King Kalaśa developed choral songs (Upāṅgagīta) in Kashmira.[8] Harṣa not only enjoyed dances and songs but could even teach dancing girls to improve their art.[9]

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[1] Elliot, I, p. 10.
[2] Ibid, pp. 16, 76
[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 101.
[4] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 84-85.
[5] Fick, *Social Organization*, pp. 294-299.
[6] Al-Biruni, I, p. 195.
[7] Marvazi, p. 41 (20).
[8] Shahriyar, p. 104.
[9] *Kāvyamīmāmsā*, p. 50.
[10] Al-Biruni, I, p. 194, Shahriyar, p. 104.
[11] See, pp. 134-141.

There are references to several kinds of musical instruments, namely the lute, cymbals, kettle-drums, tambourines[10] etc. Another Indian instrument called alkankala is also mentioned by the Muslim writers. It had only one string which passed over a leathern bag. This searved the purpose of the measures of the lute and the cymbal.[11] This instrument can be identified with the 'bow-harp', vīṇa of the vedic literature.[12] Al-Kindi, the famous Arab philosopher learned Indian music and was of opinion that tho Persians "did not derive any pleasure from the organ (al-arghin) and the gong

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1. *Rāj.*, VII, 606, 928-931; *Rāmacarita*, III, 35-37.
2 Masudi, I, p. 169.
3. Marvazi, p. 40 (14).
4. Gardizi, p. 628.
5. S.C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 211.
6. *Saṅgītaratnākara*, *Introductory*, Ch. I, v. 18; Cf. *Mānasollāsa*, p 187.
7. *Rāj.*, V.356-388; VII.944-49; VIII.1294.
8. *Rāj.*, VIII.606.
9. Ibid, VII.1140-1141.
10. Sulayman, p. 33; Al-Biruni, I, pp. 101, 180; *Chachnama*, p. 38.
11. Al-Jahiz, pp. 80-81.
12. *The Legacy of Islam*, pp. 328-330.

(naqus), while the Indians and the Romans did not enjoy the Khurasani tumbur (lute, mandoline)."[1] On festive occasion there was plenty of merry-making. According to Al-Biruni[2] 'Vasanta' and 'Holi' etc., which lasted for more than one day provided occasions for joy and merriment. People of all classes participated in them with great enthusiasm.[3] Other occasions, like marriage and the birth of a son, were celebrated with gaiety.[4]

Painting

According to Idrisi, Indian kings practised the art of drawing. Sometimes the son, who was more proficient in this art, succeeded to the throne. They took more pains in it than the students (of this art) themselves. "No other art is given preference over the art of drawing or making pictures. The art of pottery is placed on a part with it in being superior (to other arts). Thus they call the potter 'the small creator' and the picture-maker (painter) the great creator."[5] Shahriyar says that it was customary among the Indian to draw prominent people of all walks of life.[6] We are informed by the Pṛthvīrājavijaya and the Prabandhacintāmaṇi that the king maintained picture galleries for recreation and pastime to which they retired after performing their royal duties.[7]

Means of Transportation

The means of transportation in the country consisted of camels, horses, elephants, bullock-carts, boats, palanquins and litter. Elephants and horses were conveyances for the rich section of the people. Speaking of the conveyances in Kashmir, Al-Biruni remarks, "The inhabitants of Kashmir are

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1. Al-Ahwami Ahmad Fuad Al-Kindi (Cairo ed.), pp. 168-169; Cf. M. Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 131.
2. Al-Biruni, II, Ch. LXXVI, *Vīsaladevarāso*, III.13,14,87.
3. Ibid.
4. Sulayman, p. 33; Al-Biruni I, p. 181.
5. Idrisi, pp. 73-74.
6. Shahriyar, p. 98; Cf. Idrisi, p. 152.
7. *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, XI.24-105; *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (Tawney) p. 191.

pedestrians, they have no riding animals nor elephants. The noble among them ride in palanquins called *katt*, carried on the shoulders of men."[1] The Rājataraṅgiṇi confirms that litters were used by the richer section of the society.[2] But camels and elephants are also referred to by Kalhaṇa.[3] The Chachnama and Hudud mention that royal families used litters, which were carried by men and women.[4] The use of elephants, horses and boats to cross the rivers is also mentioned.[5] Camels were in great use in Rajasthan and even the image of goddess was taken in procession on the back of the camel.[6] Commodities were transferred from one place to another by means of bullock-carts.[7] Idrisi observes that in Nahrwara and in the countries bordering on it the cart was the only means of performing journey. "They load their belonging on them and the bullocks draw them and carry them wherever they wish to go. Every bullock cart has a driver and a guide."[8] Guides with the caravans are also mentioned in the Chachnama.[9] Roads were built for carrying marketable commodities.[10] They were planted with trees.[11] Bridges were built to cross water-ways, wherever necessary.[12] There were inns on highways for the convenience of travellers.[13]

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 205; Cf. Elliot, I, p. 63.
2. *Rāj.*, V.407, 407, V.33, 219, VII.478, VIII.2298, 2639, 2674, 3165.
3. Ibid, VII.722, VIII.659.
4. *Chachnama*, p. 182; *Hudud*, p. 90; Shahriyar, p. 101.
5. *Chachnama*, pp. 70, 116, 170; Elliot, I, pp. 104, 207.
6. *ASIR* (1930). pl. II.
7. *EI*, XI, p. 35.
8. Idrisi, p. 58; Cf. Elliot, I, p. 87.
9. *Chachnama*, p. 170.
10. Elliot, I, p. 14.
11. *Hudud*, p. 90; Cf. *Tabakat-i-Nasini*, p. 561.
12. Elliot, II, p. 310.
13. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 87.

CHAPTER VI

POPULAR BELIEFS, SUPERSTITIONS AND PRACTICES

Some Superstitions

Popular beliefs and superstitions had a place of their own in Hindu society. In the Matsyapurāṇa we have a long and systematic account of omens. They have been classified under appropriate heads and certain remedies have been suggested for averting their evil effects.[1] It has a separate chapter on rules for the propitiation of planets.[2] The extent of popular superstitions is mentioned in a passage of Medhātithi.[3]

From Al-Biruni we learn that when a child was born people showed particular attention to the man, not to the woman. Of the two children, they gave preference to the younger, particularly in the eastern part of the country, because "they maintain that the elder owes his birth to predominant lust, whilst the younger owes his origin to mature reflection and a calm proceeding."[4]

The Hindus considered the *crepitus ventris* as a good omen, sneezing as a bad one.[5] According to the Vīsaladevarāso, sneezing in the front was an inauspicious sign.[6] In this connection Marco Polo writes that a man, "if in going out, he hears any one sneeze, if it seems to him a good omen he will go on, but in the reverse, he will sit down on the spot where he is, as long as he thinks that he ought to tarry before

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1. *Matsyapurāṇa*, Ch. CCVIII-CCXXXIX.
2. Ibid, XCIII.
3. On *Manu.*, IX.290.
4. Al-Biruni, I, pp. 181-182.
5. Al-Biruni, I, p. 182.
6. *Vīsaladevarāso*, II.76.

going on again."[1] He adds that people paid much heed to signs and omens. To every day of the week they assigned an augury of this sort.[2] If in travelling along the road, one saw a swallow fly by in a lucky direction he would proceed, otherwise not.[3] According to Al-Biruni, Hindus considered south as foreboding evil. "In no work of piety did they direct themselves southward or walk southward. South was associated with something inauspicious. Speaking on the island of Lanka (Ceylon), he saye, "The Hindus who are the neighbours of these regions (of Lanka) believe that the small-pox is a wind blowing from the island of Lanka towards the continent to carry off souls."[4] Even in our times, south is avoided in many things.

Al-Biruni also writes that the Hindus considered the weaver unclean, but the cupper and the flayer, who killed dying animals for money, were regarded as clean.[5] At another place he includes the weavers among the Antyajas, who were untouchables.[6] According to the Bṛhadyama Smṛti, it was sinful to touch a person who dealt in red cloth.[7] In the Āpastamba Smṛti it is laid down that it is undesirable to touch or bear blue cloth or colour.[8] The weavers were regarded as unclean and untouchables perhaps because they dealt generally in red and blue cloth and colours.

Abu Zayd speaks of those who drew omens from the flights of crows. There were also men who pretended to the calculation of nativities.[9] We are informed by the Vīsaladevarāso that the flights of different birds and movements of various animals, such as fox, cat, jackal, lion, deer and serpent, etc., 'to the right or left were indicative of omens, good or bad.'[1]

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[1] Yule, *Marco Polo*, II, pp. 364-365.
[2] Ibid, p. 364.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Al-Biruni, I, p. 209.
[5] Ibid, p. 182.
[6] Ibid, p. 101.
[7] *Bṛhadyama Smṛti*, III.52.
[8] *Āpastamba Smṛti*, Ch. IV; Cf. Altekar, *The Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times*, p. 321.
[9] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 87; Elliot, I, p. 10.

As the Indians had great faith in astrological calculations, the astrologers enjoyed great respect and even kings went to their houses to consult them.[2] They had an enviable position in the court. We are informed that there was an astrologer attached to the court of Lakṣmaṇasena for divination.[3] The Gāhaḍavāla king, Govindacanda, had a person who was a diviner and could explain omens.[4] By looking at the marks of a baby the astrologers could make prophecy about his future.[5] An astrologer had predicted the birth of Harṣa.[6] Bāṇa gives a list of omens believed by the people.[7] Kings and generals did not go out on an expedition without consulting astrologers. Chach marched in the direction of Armanbel after the astrologers had declared the hour as auspicious.[8] There were soothsayers who were extremely skilled in the art of divination.[9]

To ward off the evil effects of the stars astrologers suggested provisions. When it was known that Venus was in front of Ḍahar and his victory over the Muslims was doubtful, a gold figure of Venus was made and was tied to the saddle straps of his horse to bring Venus behind his back.[10] About the supernatural powers of idols, Sulayman says that, like the Chinese, Indians also imagined that the idols they worshipped "speak to them and give them answers."[11] Muslim historians inform us that the Hindus believed that God Somanātha would annihilate the Muslims, and therefore they did not offer any resistance and the place was taken without much trouble.[1] Belief in supernatural powers made the Hindus 'complacent and deprived them of initiative and energetic perseverance'.

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[1] *Vīsaladevarāso*, II, 75-76.

[2] *Chachnama*, p. 46.

[3] Elliot, II, p. 308.

[4] *EI*, IV, pp 97-101; VII, p. 99; XVIII, p. 222.

[5] Ibid, XII, p. 127.

[6] *Harṣacarita*, Ch. II & IV.

[7] Ibid, Ch. VI.

[8] *Chachnama*, p. 38.

[9] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 87; Shahriyar, p. 52; Cf. *Chachnama*, p. 177

[10] *Chachnama*, p. 133.

[11] Sulayman, p. 35.

Belief in Talisman and Sorcery etc.

We are informed by Al-Biruni that people did not use medicine for snake-bite. In place of medicine they used charms. "It is a Hindu custom that when a man has been bitten by a venomous serpent and they have no charmer at hand, they bind the bitten man on a bundle of reeds, and place on him a leaf on which is written a blessing for that person who will accidently light upon him, and save him by a charm from destruction.'[2] Al-Biruni himself did not believe in such things. Buzurg Shahriyar also observes that people believed in magical treatment in cases of viper or serpent bites. Sometimes the operations were successful, otherwise the victims were placed in litters of branches and pushed out into the midstream of rivers.[3] About the practice of talisman, Marvazi writes, "Here too belong the Simabandat (?), i.e., wonderful talismans which they produce and invent, as well as their claims to stop rain and hail and the fact (is) that those who are in India acknowledge their (proficiency) in this science by giving to the masters in it definite yearly rewards."[4] Gardizi also confirms it.[5] However, there was no

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1. Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 116.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 194.
3. Shahriyar, pp. 104-105. Referring to a case of snake-bite, Gardizi writes, "that a man was bitten by a snake, thereupon he grew cold and became like a corpse and they wanted to bury him. Meanwhile an Indian came up and said, 'he has fainted but has not died.' He then kept reciting a spell and that man recovered his sense. (The Indian) brought out the poison from where the snake bit him and the man got up and walked away." (p. 628).
4. Marvazi, p. 40 (11).
5. Gardizi, p. 628. In this connection Marvazi writes, "Among their arts and sciences is magic. They pretend that by this means, they obtain what they want, heal poisoning while they remove the poison from the one who has drank it, or subject another person to it". (pp. 39-40)

dearth of medical knowledge among the Indians, as Marvazi informs us, "Here too belongs medicine, in which they claim wonderful achievements in preserving health, putting off senility, increasing strength and intelligence and healing inveterate and refractory ailments."[1] Al-Biruni writes on the Hindu science of *rasāyana*, with a satirical comment. "They have a science similar to alchemy which is quite peculiar to them. They call it *rasāyana*, a word composed with *ras*, i.e, gold. It means an art which is restricted to certain operations, drugs and compound medicines, most of which are taken from plants. Its principles restore the health of those who were ill beyond hope, and give back youth to fading old age so that people become again what they were in age near puberty; white hair becomes black again, the keenness of the senses is restored as well as the capacity for juvenile agility and even for cohabitation, and the life of the people in this world is even extended to a long period."[2]

Hindu belief in telepathy and phantoms is also recorded by Gardizi and Marvazi. According to them, they claimed that by its means they could work wonders. They addressed words to the absent by means of telepathy, they solved matters difficult beyonds words. They bound and unbound things, both harmful and beneficial." Here also balong sorcery (nirang), suggestion and the production of phantoms (?) which bewilder the sage and baffle the mind of the expert."[3] We are informed that the Hindus also wrote books on sorcery. Ibn Nadim says that a book on sorcery was written by a learned man named Rai and it was translated into Arabic.[4] Another book on the same subject, written by some other scholar was also translated into Arabic.[5] 'Māraṇa' mantras were

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1. Marvazi, p. 40 (12); Cf. Gardizi, "And they have medical science the like of which no one has seen in the lands of Islam. Their claims in it are numerous such as to maintain health to restrain inveterate ailments, such as some of our friends have witnessed and ourselves have heard." (p. 628).
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 188.
3. Gardizi, p. 628; Marvazi, p. 40 (10).
4. Ibn Nadim, p. 303.
5. Nadvi, p. 128.

applied by the kings over their enemies to achieve victory.[1] Undoubtedly from very ancient times Indians took interest in sorcery and in the treatment of snake-bite by charms. The use of 'yantras' for the removal of the bad effects of evil spirits and sights to ward off evil sights was quite common. Pṛthvīrāja III was provided with a necklace around his neck, which contained a tiger's claw and the illustrations of the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu.[2] According to Marvazi, people sometimes took to human sacrifice to please their favourite deity.[3] Such types of sacrifices are also mentioned in the Gauḍavaho.[4]

Manners and Customs

We have already described some manners and customs in our chapter on everyday life of the people and in the chapter on marriage and the position of women. A number of other customs have been noticed by early muslim writers, which struck them as curious.

Al-Biruni remarks that in shaking hands they grasped the hand of a man from the convex side. While entering a house they did not ask permission, but did so while leaving it. In their meetings they sat cross-legged. Regarding the education of children, he says that they used black tablets in the schools and wrote upon them along the long side, not the broad side, writing with a white material from the left to the right. "They write the titles of a book at the end of it, not at the beginning." Perhaps this indicates the manner of ending Samskṛta books with their titles.[5]

Al-Biruni was too shrewd an observer to have over-looked some of the habits and manners which appeared to him dirty and unrefined. "They let the nails grow long, glorying in their idleness, since they do not use them for any business or work, but only, while leaving a *dolce for niente* life, they scratch their heads with them and examine the hair for lice."[1] He further writes, "They spit out and blow their noses without any respect for the elder ones present, and they crack their lice before them."[2] "They like the juice which flows over the cheeks of the rutting elephant, which in reality has the most horrid smell."[3] "If one of them hands over a thing to another he expects that it should be thrown to him, as we throw a thing to the dogs."[4] Al-Jahiz refers to the Indian habit of squatting on the floor.[5] Hsuan Tsang also refers to the bad manners of a section of the Hindus. According to him, the people of Lampa were "ill-mannered" and the inhabitants of Takka country "had rude bad ways and low vulgar speech."[6] Shahriyar has also recorded one of the bad habits of the Hindus. In the estimation of the Hindus, urine (of a child) was less nasty than water in which the hand or the mouth had been washed. The used water according to them was filthiest.[7] No doubt some of the habits mentioned above are dirty, but these statements are too sweeping and general in character. Al-Biruni pays a handsome tribute to the gentle manners of the people.[8] According to Hsuan Tsang also the inhabitants of India in general bore good manners.[9]

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[1] Ojha, *Madhyakalina Samskriti*, p. 62.

[2] *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, VIII, 43-44.

[3] Marvazi, pp. 44-45 (33).

[4] Ojha, *op.cit.*, p. 62.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, p. 182.

In the end Al-Biruni comments on what he terms the innate perversity of the Hindu character. "If the Hindus claim to differ from us and to be something better than we, as we on our side, of course, do *vice versa*, we might settle the question by an experiment to be made with their boys. I never knew a Hindu boy who had only recently come into

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 180.
[2] Ibid, p. 182.
[3] Ibid, pp. 182-183.
[4] Ibid, p. 182.
[5] Al-Jahiz, p. 6.
[6] Watters, I, pp. 181, 286.
[7] Shahriyar, p. 102.
[8] Al-Biruni, II, p. 161.
[9] Watters, I, p. 286.

Muhammadan territory who was not thoroughly versed in the manners and customs of the people, but at the same time he would place the shoes before his master in a wrong order, the right one to the left foot and *vice-versa*; he would, in folding, turn his master's garments inside out, and spread the carpets so that the underpart is uppermost, and more of the kind. All of which is a consequence of the innate perversity of the Hindu nature."[1] It may be noted that Al-Biruni does not criticise the Hindus alone for their 'heathen practices'. He does not spare the heathen Arabs for their crimes and obscenities.[2]

Customs relating Antyesti : Funeral Ceremonies

Only Al–Biruni has mentioned the verious stages of the disposal of the dead bodies of the Hindus. The first is concerned with the disposal of dead bodies in the most ancient times. The bodies of the dead were thrown on the open field without any covering.[3] Of this form of disposal there is no pre–vedic record. In the Ṛgveda there is only one reference to it, but the funeral hymns have no description of it.[4] In the primitive nomadic society it could be a very comon practice, but according to Dr. R.B. Pandey, "during the Vedic period the Indo–Aryans were not nomadic people but they led a settled and civilized life and the aged were held in love and respect. So no exposure of the aged persons took place."[5]

The second stage of disposal, ascribed to a legislator, whose name is not mentioned, was that of exposing the dead bodies to the winds by placing them in roofed buildings, having walls of rails. This practice was similar to that of the grave-towers of Zoroastrians.[6] But this form too is not mentioned in the ritual literature of the Hindus. This custom, according to Dr. Pandey, was prevalent in a rude or archaic society, "that believed that the soul or spirit of the man was still dwelling in the body after his death."[1] According to the Ṛgveda, after death the spirit departs from the dead body.[2] Therefore the need of preserving the dead body does not arise.[3] This practice, says Al–Biruni, was followed for a long time and was replaced by the existing one, that is, burning the dead. Referring to the separation of the soul from the body, Al-Biruni writes, "Regarding this return (of the immortal soul to God), the Hindus think that partly it is effected by the rays of the sun, the soul attaching itself to them and ascending with them, partly by the flame of the fire, which raises it (to God). Some Hindu used to pray that God would make his road to himself as a straight line, because this is the nearest road, and that there is no other road upwards save the fire or the ray."[4] From the Vedic times to the present the disposal of the dead body by burning has been the most recognized method among the Hindus. The dead were usually burnt on the pyre.[5]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 185.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, II, p. 167.

[4] R.B. Pandey, *Hindu Saṁskāras*, pp. 412-413.

[5] Ibid, p. 413

[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 167.

Hindu Manner of Cremation

In this connection Sulayman records that the dead body of a king, "is embalmed with sandal-wood, *camphor* and saffron and is then burnt and the ashes are scattered abroad to the wind."[6] Abu Zayd also refers to it. He says, "They burn their dead."[7] Al-Biruni writes, "According to the Hindus, the body of the dead has the claim upon his heirs that they are te wash, embalm, wrap it in a shroud, and then to burn it with as much sandal and other wood as they can get."[8] We are informed by the author of the Chachnama that when

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1. R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, p. 421.
2. *Ṛgveda*, X.14.7-9, as quoted by Dr. R.B. Pandey, p. 421.
3. R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, p. 421.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 168.
5. Elliot, I, p. 10, II, p. 45; Al-Biruni, II, p. 169.
6. Sulayman, p. 31.
7. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 82; Elliot, I, p. 10.
8. Al-Biruni, II, p. 169.

Daharsiah died Dahar ordered a large quantity of sandalwood to be collected and with it he burnt the dead body of Daharsiah, and performed the usual mourning ceremonies.[1] All these rites are performed to this day. After burning the dead body the immersion of ashes took place. Al-Biruni writes, "Part of his burned bones are brought to the Ganges and thrown into it, that the Ganges should flow over them, as it has flowed over the burned bones of the children of Sagara, thereby forcing them from hell and bringing them into paradise. The remainder of the ashes is thrown into some brook of running water."[2] Utbi also writes that after cremation the ashes of dead were thrown into the Gaṅgā.[3] It was considered meritorious to throw the bones of the dead body into the sacred rivers, especially in the Gaṅgā. "The virtuous one, whose bone floats on the water of the Gaṅgā never returns from the Brahmaloka to the world of the mortals. Those, whose bones are thrown into the Gaṅgā by men live in heaven for thousands of Yugas."[4] This custom refers to the ceremony of 'Asthi Sañcayan' or the collection of bones,[5] which follows cremation. The Gṛhyasūtras contain a detailed account of the ceremony.[6]

Referring to another Hindu manner of burial, Al-Biruni writes, "On the spot, where the body has been burned they raise a monument similar to a mile-stone, plastered with gypsum."[7] This seems to indicate the ceremony of Pitṛmedha or Śmaśāna,[8] i.e., "the building of a mound over the remains of a dead person."[9] In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa we

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1. *Chachnama*, pp. 53-54.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 169.
3. Utbi, (Tr. Sharma), p. 61; Elliot, II, pp. 45-46.
4. *Yama* quoted by Jayarama on *Pār.Gṛ.S.*, III.10.
5. *Āśv.Gṛ.S* , IV.5; *Baud.Dh*.S., I.16.
6. R.*B*. Pandey, *op.cit.*, pp. 454-457.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 169; Idrisi says that the Hindus do not raise tombs for the dead. Elliot, I, p. 88; Nainar, p. 105; Cf. E. Thurston, *Ethnographic Notes*, p. 137.
8. *Baudh.Dh S.*, I.18.
9. R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, p. 460.

find a detailed description of the Śmaśāna ceremony,[1] which was, however, not a universal practice.[2] No doubt, among the Buddhists, the custom of raising a mound was popular, but Al-Biruni mentions it in regard to the Hindus. Possibly this custom of disposal of the dead body was restricted to great saints, monks and saṁnyasins. In this connection Dr. R.B. Pandey remarks, "The Paddhatis make this custom optional and allot it a very insignificant position amidst the funeral ceremonies. In modern Hinduism, the raising of a mound is almost stopped and the building of the Samādhis or Stūpas is limited to a few religious celebrities."[3] Al-Biruni writes that by the order of the Buddha the Śramaṇas threw their dead into the rivers.[4] Hsuan Tsang also mentions this system of burial.[5]

The bodies of children under three years were not buried.[6] At present, too, the dead bodies of small children are not buried, because they are considered 'too innocent to require a purification.' As they do not require all the necessaries of this world for the next world, they do not stand in need of a funeral. Water-burial is therefore accorded to them. This is done with a view to seçuring their rebirth.[7] Those who could not afford to burn their dead threw the dead body into running water or in an open field.[8] It was the easiest way of disposal of the dead. After cremation, Al-Biruni says, the people washed themselves as well as their dress during two days, because by touching the dead they had become unclean.[9] Hsuan Tsang also points out that those who joined the funeral procession could not become clean without a bath.[10]

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1. *Śat. Br.*, XIII.8.
2. R.B. pandey, *op-cit.*, p. 461.
3. Ibid, p. 462.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 169.
5. Watters, I, pp. 174-175.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 170.
7. R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, pp. 417, 425.
8. Al-Biruni, II, p. 170.
9. Ibid
10. Watters, I, p. 175.

Sulayman and Ibn-ul-Faqah say that people shaved their heads and beards after the death of their near and dear.[1] In the Chachnama we are told that when king Dahar died, people came to the court of Kasim with their heads and beards clean shaved.[2] Ibn-ul-Faqah also mentions that the people of Hind abstained continuously from food and drink for seven days.[3] In the Chachnama it is mentioned that Dahar, after the death of his brother, tore his clothes out of grief, threw off his turban and took to mourning with cries.[4] Sulayman, Masudi and Idrisi, with a slight variation, observe that when the king died his corpse was carried on a low carriage very near the ground. On that people placed the bier surmounted by the crown and the dead body clad in all its funeral ornaments being laid upon the bier, it was dragged by people all round the city. The head was uncovered and the hair dragged upon the ground. This was done so that every body could see the corpse. They took the dead body to the place where the bodies of the kings were burnt. The body of the king was embalmed with sandal-wood, camphor and saffron and then it was burnt.[5]

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Duties of the Heir towards the Deceased

Al-Biruni writes that sixteen banquets were to be given by the heir of the deceased, namely, on the 15th and 16th day of the death, then once a month during the whole year and further one banquet on the last but one day of the year, to the deceased the ancestors, and finally, on the last day of the year. The banquet in the sixth month must be more

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1. Sulayman, p. 31; *Hindustan*, I, p. 155; Nainar, p. 105.
2. *Chachnama*, p. 164.
3. *Hindustan*, I, p. 155; Nainar, p. 105.
5. *Chachnama*, p. 51.
5. Sulayman, p. 31; Idrisi, p. 61; Masudi, I, pp. 167-68; Elliot, I, pp. 6, 88. Idrisi ascribes this practice to the kings of India, which Sulayman and Masudi had attributed to the rulers of Ceylon only. A woman who accompanied the corpse loudly addressed the people about the vanity of all earthly things. The historicity of the custom is doubtful. Nainar, p. 151; Hodivala, p. 8.

sumptuous. Every guest, in addition to his food, received alms also. It is further recommanded that the son of the deceased must put on mourning dress throughout the year. In the first part of the mourning year the heirs were forbidden nourishments for one day. They had to make, above the door of the house, something like a shelf projecting from the wall in the open air, on which they placed every day a dish of something cooked and a vessel of water, till the end of ten days after the death. This provision was made for the spirit of the dead which was believed to move to and fro around the house, hungry and thirsty.[1] In the end Al-Biruni observes, "On the tenth of the last mentioned days, the heir spends, in the name of the deceased, much food and cold water. After the eleventh day, the heir sends every day sufficient food for a single person and a *dirham* to the house of the Brahmana, and continues doing this during all the days of the mourning year without any interruption until its end."[2]

Many of the above-mentioned rites and ceremonies, including the banquets, are observed among the Hindus, but they are not so elaborate as Al-Biruni describes. Moreover, the details of such ceremonies vary from place to place. It is not definitely known whether as many as sixteen banquets were given in honour of the deceased, but some banquets are given everywhere.

Custom of "Sitting Dharna"

Idrisi informs us about one of the characteristic marks of the people's love of truth and horror of vice. He writes, "if a man has a claim against anyone of them, and he happens to meet him wheresoever it may be, a circle (lit. something like a ring) is drawn from him (the claimant) on the ground. The claimant enters this ring, and the defendant also enters it voluntarily. He does not leave it until he does justice to him and pays the debt, or the claimant excuses him.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 165-66.
2. Ibid, p. 166.

He then leaves the circle."[1] On this subject Qazvini furnishes the same information,[2] and he has copied the passage from Idrisi. Hodivala takes it as the oldest description in a foreign writer of the old Hindu Custom of 'Sitting Dharna'.[3] Marco Polo also mentions it adding that it was carried out against the king of Malaber.[4] Ibn Battuta's description of the custom is slightly different. "Their custom is this; the creditor awaits the debtor at the door of the palace and when the debtor is on the point of entering he says to him, 'O, enemy of the Sultan, by the head of the Sultan you shall not enter until you have paid me.' The debtor may not leave the place after that until he pays him or obtains a delay from him."[5]

Practice of Committing Suicide

The practice of committing suicide by people, especially in old age, in sacred places is noticed by early Muslim writers. It has been generally condemned by the writers of the Dharmaśāstras as a great sin. Manu recommends that 'no water is to be offered for the benefit of the soul of those who kill themselves.'[6] It was a common practice during the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata among the great warriors and learned Brāhmaṇas.[7] This shows that it was a vary old custom.

Many methods were employed for this purpose. Abu Zayd records that men and women 'desire those of their family to throw them into the fire and drown them when they are grown old, or perceive themselves to sink under the weight of their years, firmly believing they are to return in other bodies.'[1] Abu Zayd further writes that there were persons who burnt themselves. A man who desired to burn himself took the permission of the king. After making round of the city, he went to the place where the pile of dry wood was heaped up. He was surrounded by his friends and relations. Some one put upon his head a floral crown of straw and dry herbs, filled with burning fire, on which they poured sandarac which caught fire immediately. Though the skin of his head was burnt, he remained standing in the same posture, and then moving a few steps, he came to the pile, threw himself into it and was soon reduced to ashes. Another person who wanted to burn himself came near the pile and drew out a big knife and with it ript down from his breast to the rim of his belly and that this done, he with his left hand pulled out a flap of his liver talking all the time and 'displaying an invincible contempt of death and a wonderful patience under his torments, till at last he leaped into the fire.'[2] In this regard Idrisi writes that there were people who worshipped fire and burnt themselves into it.[3] But Marvazi informs us that those who burnt themselves with fire were blamed.[4] This points to the mode of suicide by burning oneself with fire. Marvazi further writes, "Some of them burn themselves with fire and some drown themselves in water, some starve themselves to death. Some of them roam in deserts until they are dead, some precipitate themselves from high mountain in their country under which they place a (sort of) tree made of iron with sharpened boughs and branches. The man throws himself on it from the mountain and gets cut into pieces."[5]

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[1] Idrisi, p. 60; Elliot, I, p. 88. Dr. Ahmad is of opinion that Idrisi's account seems to be based on hearsay. He has ommitted one detail, namely, that the name of a particular deity, "was imprecated upon the debtor, who was supposed to have been cursed by this divinity if he left the circle without paying the debt." Idrisi, p. 151.

[2] Qazvini, *Asarul Bilad* (Gildemeiter), p. 55 (Tr.), p. 197.

[3] Hodivala, p. 68; Idrisi (commentary by Ahmad), p 191.

[4] Yule, II, p. 343 (ed. London, 1926).

[5] Ibn Battuta (H.A.R. Gibb, p. 208); Cf. Ibn Battuta (*De Fremery*), III, p. 412; *IA* , VIII, p. 267.

[6] *Manu.*, V.99.

[7] *IA*, XXXV, p. 219.

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1. Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 82; Elliot, I, pp. 9-10.
2. Ibid, pp. 80-81.
3. Idrisi, p. 38.
4. Marvazi, p. 45 (35). According to Gardizi, whoever burnt himself in it purified himself of all impurities. p. 636 (26).
5. Ibid, p, 46 (41-42).

Some people who were naked and attenuated, with their eyes sunken and skins shrivelled from the excess of mortification, cast themselves down before the idol where vultures, accustomed to eating human flesh, finished with them.[1] Ibn Rusta also observes that before the sun-idol of Multan sometimes people committed suicide.[2] Buzurg bin Shahriyar writes that the people who wanted to commit suicide hired someone to drown them.[3] Old people waited for the tide to take them off.[4] Shahriyar also mentions that cow-dung was used for this purpose.[5]

Ibn-ul-Faqah gives a gruesome description of self-immolation. "A man came into a temple in Multan. He had wrapped cotton soaked with oil over his head and fingers. After reaching there he lit the cotton and the fire emanating from those cotton sticks caught his body and he was burnt to ashes in the same way with utmost patience and calm."[6] Dimishqi (1325 A.D), though a late writer, gives a similar account of self-torture prevalent during his times. He writes, "Sometimes a pilgrim plaits his hair in corded wool and cotton, dips it in oil and grasps a dagger in his right hand. Then he goes to the temple, followed by friends and relatives and priests who escort him to the fire. As he approaches to it he takes fire in his hand and sets to the horns. Then he put out his hand to the skin of his belly and cuts six times with the dagger, upto the liver, pulls out the liver, cuts off it a piece and gives it to his nearest friend. Then he throws himself into the fire which consumes him. When he has been reduced to ashes they take them, sprinkle them on the river Ganges or put them in water from the river Ganges and sprinkle them on their bodies. In this way they get a blessing."[1] Mutahhar and Gardizi give a graphic description of various cases and methods of suicide. These accounts relate to various religious sects. According to Mutahhar, the followers of one sect believed that by burning and throwing the body into the fire they would get salvation and enter the eternal Heaven.[2] They inform us that people dug a ditch near a water and filled it with burning stuff. The man who wanted to commit suicide, came, fumigated himself and prostrated before every body and threw himself into the ditch. When his body caught fire he came out and plunged into water and remained there till he was dead. If he had died in the fire or water he was believed to have gained Paradise, but if he had died between the two, he did not.[3]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 49 (55).

[2] Ibn Rusta (Tr.), p. 55.

[3] Shahriyar, pp. 106-107.

[4] Ibid. Ibn Battuta also mentions a similar practice of drowning oneself in the river Ganga solely with the purpose of approaching God. He adds that when the man died, people took him out and burnt him and cast his ashes into the river. (p. 193).

[5] Shahriyar, p. 125.

[6] Qazvini, *Asarul-Bilad*, p. 81; Cf. Nadvi, p. 175; Nainar, p. 116.

Some people heated stones and placed these burning pieces one after another on the belly of the person who wished to undergo the test, until a hole appeared in his belly and his bowels fell out and he died.[4] Some kindled four fires and stood in the middle holding one foot in one hand and resting on the other. They remained in this position until they finally fell of weakness and died being consumed by the fire.[5]

There were some who carved pieces of flesh out of their thighs and cutting them into small slices they threw them into the fire, till they succumbed to death.[6] Some entered the cow's dung upto their calves, then sat down and kindled fire. They remained in the same position until the fire caught them

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1. Nainar, p. 116.
2. Mutahhar, IV, p. 16. Mutahhar further writes, "They dig a hole and kindle fire in it pouring colour, oil and perfumes into it, and then go near it and sound cymbals and drums. The man who has to burn his body bows down to four directions, east, west, south and north, and throws himself in the fire." Gardizi does not mention it.
3. Gardizi, p. 638 (34); Mutahhar, IV, p. 17.
4. Mutahhar, IV, p. 16; Gardizi, p. 638 (35).
5. Gardizi, p. 638 (35).
6. Ibid, p. 638 (36); Mutahhar, IV, p. 17.

and they fell down and died.[1] According to Mutahhar, some people burnt Guggul, a kind of incense, in the shape of a crown over their heads and kindled it with fire so much so that their brain and eyes melted.[2] Some heated an oven (tandur) and the man sat in it, caught fire and burnt.[3] Others killed themselves by hunger and thirst. They were called Anshl (Anshaniyya) not eating. Some died on the twentieth day and some survived upto thirty days. First they were unable to walk, then to sit and then to utter a word, then they lost their senses, and finally grew motionless and died.[4] Mutahhar adds that some walked on the ground till they died.[5]

Gardizi mentions a sect called Trisuli (spelt t.r shuli) which had its own custom of committing suicide. There was a huge tree named 'batu' ('Vaṭa' 'banyan-tree') on the bank of the river Gaṅgā. Under it they had fixed a 'triśūl', which was made of iron and rose above the level of the river several tens of cubits. It was fixed in a perpendicular position. A man desirous of committing suicide addressed the river Gaṅgā and fixed the perpendicular trident to his body. One amongst the assembled climbed the tree and then fell down on the reclining person. Soon the person was shattered to pieces and his body fell in the river.[6] According to Masudi, people used to go to the upper source of the Gaṅgā, where there were high mountains and bushes with thorns. There were fixed irons, swords and pieces of wood. People, desirous of reaching heaven, went and fell upon the bushes and fixed iron pieces. The body cut into pieces flowed in the river.[7] Mutahhar adds, "There is a mountain below which there is a tree made up of iron which has iron rods like those for preparing meat

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1. Gardizi, p. 639 (37); Mutahhar, IV, p. 16.
2. Mutahhar, IV, p. 16.
3. Gardizi, p. 639 (38).
4. Ibid, p. 639 (39); Mutahhar, IV, p. 18.
5. Mutahhar, IV, p. 18.
6. Gardizi, p. 639 (40).
7. Masudi, quoted in *India as told by the Muslims*, pp, 206–7.

for food. A man reads from a book, that it is a message of blessing for those who climbing the mountain take out their intestines on the tree so that they may remain in heaven. The heavenly women will jump and take them up. On this some people get forward and fall upon the tree with their faces on it."[1] There was a sect of people who assembled daily on the spot where the Gaṅgā joins with Yamunā (Jaun). Each brought with him a sharp weapon. One of the devotees who wished to purify himself and reach God, came near them. They threw upon him whatever they had of garments, ornaments, golden necklaces, bracelets and the like, and then they slew him with the weapons and cut him into two. They threw one part into the Gaṅgā and the other into the Yamunā. They believed that the two streams would take him to the Paradise.[2] Mutahhar also mentions a similar practice. He adds that some people used to go to the Gaṅgā on some particular festival. The priests who lived there cut them into two pieces and threw them into the river. They believed that they should thus enter the heaven.[3] Mutahhar further informs us that there were some who sat naked all along till a bird bit their flesh and ate them up.[4] Gardizi mentions this practice in greater detail. He writes that there was a group from which the devotee went out to the desert. Birds of prey, such as eagles, hawks, falcons, etc., gathered raund him. The birds that approached him grew bolder until they struck him with their beaks. They took off his flesh and ate it. After the birds had eaten all the flesh the members of one sect took each a piece of the bones as a blessing. They carried the bones and burnt them in their house and used them in the medicines administered to the patients in grave illness.[5]

The observations of Al-Biruni on suicide deserve to be quoted at length. "Now as regards the right of the body of

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1. Mutahhar, IV, p. 18.
2, Gardizi, p. 639 (41).
3. Mutahhar, IV, p. 18.
4. Ibid.
5. Gardizi, p. 640 (42).

the living, the Hindus would not think of burning it save in the case of a widow who chooses to follow her husband or in the case of those who are tired of their life, who are distressed over some incurable disease of their body, some irremovable bodily defect, or old age and infirmity. This, however, no man of distinction does, but only Vaiśyas and Śūdras especially at those times which are prized as the most suitable for a man to acquire in them, for a future repetition of life a better form and condition than that in which he happens to have been born and to live. Burning oneself is forbidden to Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas by a special law. Therefore those, if they want to kill themselves, do so at the time of an eclipse in some other manner, or they hire some body to drown them in the Ganges keeping them under water till they are dead."[1]

"At the junction of the two rivers Yamuna and Ganges, there is a great tree called Prayaga, a tree of the species called Vata.......Here the Brahmans and the Ksatriyas are in the habit of committing suicide by climbing up the tree and throwing themselves into the Ganges."[2]

The accounts of the Muslim writers as mentioned above have corroborative evidence in the Indian sources. The practice of committing suicide is mentioned in the Matsya, Kūrma and Padma Purāṇas.[3] The Smṛtis, the epics and the Purāṇas allow self-immolation for the purpose of penance. Manu advises an intending person to walk fully determined to go on straight, in a north-easterly direction, subsisting on water and air, until his body sinks to rest. Atri does not condemn suicide in certain cases. He states, "if one who is very old (beyond 70), if one cannot observe the rules of bodily purification (owing to extreme weakness), if one is so ill that all medical help is discarded, if one in these circumstances kills himself by throwing himself from a precipice or

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1. Al Biruni, II, pp. 170-71.
2. Ibid; Cf. I, p. 200,
3. *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 105, v. 11; *Kūrma Purāṇa*, Ch. 37, vv. 8-9; *Padma Purāṇa*, *Svargakhaṇḍa*, Ch. 43, v. 11.

into fire or water or by fasting, mourning should be observed for him for three days and Śraddha may be performed for him."[1] Aparārka quotes several Smṛtis in support of this and remarks that, "by doing so he incurs no sin and his death is far better than *tapas* and should not desire to live mainly (without being able to perform the duties laid down by the Śāstras)."[2] Lakṣmīdhara quotes extensively from the Matsya Purāṇa and praises those who commit suicide by burning themselves at Vārāṇasī, or drowning themselves at Prayāga or by leaping from the hills at Amarkaṇṭaka into the river Narmadā to drown themselves.[3] The Anuśāsanaparva of the Mahābhārata recommends, "if a man knowing the Vedanta and understanding the ephemeral nature of life abandons life in the holy Himalaya by fasting, he would reach the world of Brahma."[4] The Mahābhārata also permits one to end his life at a sacred place like Pṛthūdaka and Prayāga.[5] The Matsya Purāṇa says, "The one who departs from his body near the Akṣayavaṭa in Prayāga, goes straight to the region of Śiva."[6] Prayāga is recommended as a place where one is not only permitted but persuaded to commit suicide. The reward of suicide at the Saṅgama is equated with that of the wise, virtuous Yogin.[7] It is stated to be 'along spell of existence in svargaloka enjoying the crude pleasures of the senses in the company of divine women till time comes to be reborn in a good family.'[8] By doing this such a person reborn becomes king of Bhāratavarṣa. Moreover, one who jumps from the sacred Vaṭavṛkṣa into the river below and so ends his life goes to Rudraloka.[9] In Prayāga Hsuan Tsang saw that at the junction of the rivers there was the grand Arena of largesse, to the east of which 'every day the number of the people arrived to the sacred water hoping to be reborn in the Heaven.'[1] I-tsing saw many people drowning themselves there every day.[2]

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[1] *Atri*, 218-219 quoted by Medhātithi on *Manu*, V.89; *Mit.* on *Yāj.* III.6; *Aparārka*, p. 942.

[2] *Aparārka*, p. 536

[3] *Tīrtha.* (*KKT.*), pp. 21, 138-139, 142-46, 200.

[4] *Mbh. Anuśāsanaparva*, 25, 62-64: Cf. *Vanaparva*, 85, 33.

[5] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 925 ff.

[6] *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 105, v. 11.

[7] *Tīrtha.* (*KKT*), p. 143.

[8] Ibid, pp. 138-39.

[9] Ibid, p. 142.

According to Al-Biruni, as the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas were not allowed to kill themselves by special law, they drowned themselves in the Gaṅgā. The special law probably refers to the Kalivarja provison on the subject.[3] According to the Tīrthaprakāśa, suicide at Prayāga was allowed at least for Kṣatriyas and the other lower castes, for it wes declared as a Kalivarja (forbidden in the Kali age) for only Brāhmaṇas.[4] The Śuddhi-tattva holds that suicide by entering water and the like is allowed in Kali only to the Śūdras and forbidden to Brāhmaṇas and others.[5] In this connection C.V. Vaidya remarks, "This rule strictly interpreted would mean that the suicide of old men and others by falling into fire or from precipices was prohibited, and would leave the permission to drown oneself in a river intact. However, as the practice of committing suicide by drowning oneself still continued such interpretation would be necessary. There is a clear reference in Al-Biruni to a Kalivarja provision."[6]

There were at least four methods of self-immolation prescribed by Dharmaśāstra writers. The Matsyapurāṇa praises the man who ends his life by fire, poison, water or by fasting.[7] According to Manu, a Brāhmaṇa attains the world of Brahma if he gets rid of his body through any of the means practised by ancient sages, i.e., by drowning oneself in a river, leaping from a height, burning, starvation etc.[1] The Ain-i-Akbari mentions five kinds of suicide which were held meritorious by the Hindus in the medieval period, namely, suicide by starving, by burning oneself with kindled cow-dung, by burying oneself in snow, by throwing oneself in the water and by cutting one's throat at Prayāga (Allahabad) at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā.[2] These methods were popular.

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[1] Watters, I, p. 364. The Chinese pilgrim adds that even animals killed themselves in the holy region.

[2] Takakusu, p. 198.

[3] C.V. Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 399.

[4] *Tīrthaprakāśa*, p. 354.

[5] *Śuddhitattva*, pp. 284-85; Cf. Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 939.

[6] C.V. Vaidya, *op.cit.*, III, p. 399.

[7] *Matsyapurāṇa*, Ch. 186, 28-33.

Many historical instances of religious suicide are recorded in the inscriptions. According to Aphsad stone inscription, Kumāragupta III entered into a fire of cow-dung cakes 'as into water' at Prayāga[3] The Khaira plates says that king Gāṅgeyadeva Cedi obtained release from this world along with his one hundred wives near the famous banyan tree of Prayāga.[4] According to Princep, the Baroda plates of the Rāṣṭrakūta king Karka Suvarṇavarṣa refer to Dhruva's drowning himself at Prayāga.[5] King Dhaṅgadeva of the Candella dynasty, who is said to have lived for more than a hundred years abandoned his life at Prayāga by contemplating on Rudra.[6] It is said that the Cālukya king Someśvara, who fell ill with fever, put an end to his life by drowning himself in the Tuṅgabhadrā in 1068 A.D.[7] When in Kashmir the king could not tolerate the destruction of his subject, he ended his life by burning himself.[8] According to Jodhapur inscription, Bhīlāditya lived near the Gaṅgā where he ended his life by fasting.[9] Suicide by fasting of a Jain congregation is mentioned by Kalandri inscription. In Kashmir an officer supervised

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1. *Manu.* VI, 31.
2. *Ain.* (Blochmann), II; Cf. W. Ward, *A View of the History, Literature and Religion of the Hindoos,* II, pp. 115-119; R.L. Mitra, *Indo-Aryans,* II, p. 70.
3. *CII,* III, no. 42, p. 203.
4. *EI,* XII, p. 211, XXI, p. 94.
5. Dr. Altekar rejects the view of princep, *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and their Times,* p. 58.
6. *EI,* I, p. 140.
7. *Epigraphia Carnatica,* II, p. 136.
8. *Rāj* II, 41.
9. *EI,* XVIII, pp. 96-98.

suicides by fasting.[1] Suicide by poison is not recorded in the inscriptions.

Sacrifice for the Kings

Another practice of committing suicide by the royal servants of kings at the time of the death of their masters is also recorded by Muslim writers. Abu Zayd observes that in the kingdom of the Balahara and in all the other kingdoms of the Indies there were persons who burnt themselves at the death of their kings. There were kings who upon their accession to the throne performed a special rite. A great quantity of rice was cooked for the new monarch and was sarved on a plantain leaf. He invited from among his companions three or four hundred persons, and those who came of their own accord without the least compulsion, presented themselves before the king. After he had eaten some of this rice he gave the remainder of it to each of them, who ate in his presence. By eating this rice it became incumbent upon them to burn themselves to the last man. When the king died or was slain, they punctually fulfilled their promise by throwing themselves into the fire and burning themselves to death.[2] According to Reinaud this custom was confined to the Nairs. But from the statement of Masudi it appears that it prevailed all over India. He adds that men who thus killed themselves immediately after the death of their king were called sincere friends of the deceased, who die with his death and live with his life.[3] However, Masudi does not mention the rice-eating ceremony.

According to Bāṇa when Prabhākaravardhana died many of his favourite servants, friends and ministers burnt themselves with him.[4] Similar instances may be quoted from Nāgānanda, Mālatīmādhava and Daśakumāracarita.[5] Kalhaṇa mentions that Gajja cremated herself with her son Ananda,[1] Vallabha with her brother-in-law Malla,[2] and the sister of Dilhabhaṭṭāraka with her brother.[3] When Vīradhavala vaghela died (1238 A.D.) 'one hundred and eighty two of his servants passed with their lord to the flames and Tejahpāla his minister, had to interpose a military force to prevent further sacrifices."[4]

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[1] *Rāj.* VI, 1411-25.

[2] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 79; Nainar, pp. 106-7; Elliot, I, p. 9.

[3] Masudi, II, p. 87.

[4] *Harṣacarita*, p. 172.

[5] *Daśakumāracarita, Pūrvapīṭhika, Ucchavāsa IV.*

The epigraphic records of the Colas and the Cālukyas mention such types of suicides. The kings maintained suicide-squads in their service, called Garuḍas.[5] There are a number of references to such men especially in the Hoysala records.[6] The Hoysaleśvara temple at Halebid had one thousand Garuḍas, headed by prince Lakṣmaṇa depicted as taking their own lives in various ways by swords, daggers and by head swinging after the death of their king Ballala II. Prince Lakṣmaṇa was his prime minister.[7] According to Dr. Venkataramannayya these people were called 'Velaikkaran', i.e., 'men who were bound by a convenant',[8] which was picked up by the Muslim writers as 'Balanjavia' (from persian word 'Biranj' for 'rice'), which was a symbol of this rice-eating ceremony.[9]

Voluntary immolationg by the friends of the dead or his relatives is also mentioned by Ibn Nadim, who writes, "There is in India a sect called Al Rah-maryana. They are the partisans of kings and it is a part of their law in their religion to aid kings. They say God the Creator....has made them kings and if we are slain in their service, we go to Paradise."[10]

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1. *Raj*, VII 1380.
2. Ibid, VII.1486.
3. Ibid, VIII.446.
4. Forbes, *Rāsamālā* (Oxford University Press, reprint), I, p. 251; Bombay Gazetteer, I part I, p. 203.
5. Hodivala, II, p. 2.
6. Rice, *Epigraphia Carnatica*, V, pp. 71-74.
7. KAN. Shastri, *The Pandya Kingdom*, p. 19; cf. *Archaeologial Report on Epigraphy* (Madras), 1918 Part II.
8. *Journal of Oriental Research*, XIV, Part II.
9. Hodivala, II, p. 2; Cf. KAN. Shastri, *Colas*, II, p. 225.
10. Ibn Nadim, p 490; (Trans. by Rehatsek) *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 50.

Shahriyar, Gardizi and Marvazi also refer to the practice.[1] Shahriyar writes, "Some noble persons used to come to the king and used to say, 'We shall bear the calamity with you.' The king used to feed them with rice, served by his own hands, and give them betel-leaves. The people used to cut their small finger and put it before the king. These people thus became his intimate companions. They always took care of the king in everything, eating, drinking, sleeping etc. When the king went to war, they fought with him. If he burnt himself, they also did the same... In the end, the king dug a hole and filled it with fire. He jumped into it and was burnt. On that day 2,000 persons who had pledged to bear the calamity with the king, burnt themselves with the king."[2] Rehatsek suggests, following Brokhaus and Reinaud, that the name should be 'Rajputriyah', 'sons of kings'.[3] But Hodivala is of the opinion that the correct restoration is 'Rajamaitraiha', 'friends of the king', 'sincere friends who died with his death and lived with his life', as Masudi puts it.[4] The custom seems to have continued throughout the medieval period. Amir Khusrau, Barbosa and Abul Fazl have mentioned cases of voluntary immolation by the intimate associates of Indian kings.[5]

General Estimate of Hindu Character

As regards racial characteristics, early Muslim writers describe Indians as 'a handsome, attractive and tall people'. The women were more beautiful than their men counterparts.[6] The women of Takka-desa (Punjab), according to Al-Masudi,

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1. Shahriyar, pp. 115 and 118; Gardizi, p. 634 (20); Marvazi p. 43 (29).
2. Shahriyar, III, pp. 115, 118; *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 50; *Hindustan*, I, p. 198. This account of Shahriyar is related with the story of a parrot and a king. The king had assured the parrot, who was afraid of the cat that he would bear the calamity with the bird. The king ate rice with the parrot. The parrot was killed by the cat. According to his promise, the king decided to burn himself and by so doing he acted according to the custom.
3. *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 50.
4. Hodivala, I, p. 10.
5. Amir Khusrau, *Nuh Sipihr*; Elliot, III, p. 564; Barbosa (Tr. Dames) I, p. 217; Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari* (Tr. Jarrett), II, p. 118.
6. Al-Jahiz, pp. 80-81; Sulayman, p. 13.

were the most beautiful in India.[1] On the basis of secondary sources, Al-Jahiz writes that the 'Indians possessed such qualities as the Chinese did not'[2] The people of eastern India were more beautiful than of any other nation.[3] On account of different habitat, climatic conditions and environment, people were of different colours, 'very fair, brown and black, for it was the climate of the region that imparted such colours to its inhabitants.'[4] The people were skilful, clever and shrewd.[5]

The writers have given a favourable estimate of the general character of the Indians. Al Biruni, while introducing his account of the Indian law of punishments and expiations, pays handsome tributes to the gentle manners of the people. "The manners and the customs of the Hindus," he says, "resemble those of the Christians, for they are, like those of the latter, based on the principles of virtue and abstinence from wickedness, such as never to kill under any circumstance whatsoever, to give to him who has stripped you of your coat also your shirt, to offer to him who has beaten your cheek the other cheek also, to bless your enemy and to pray for him upon my life, this is a noble philosophy. But the people of this world are not all philosophers. Most of them are ignorant and erring, who cannot be kept on the straight road save by the sword and the whip."[6] The high quality of Indian moral character has been pointed out by others also. Foreigners were highly impressed by the honesty of the Indians and they have testified to it. Jahiz writes that the Indians, specially Sindhis, were well-known for their honesty. When the people of Rome and Khurasan could not be trusted with the keys of the treasury, no body suspected Indian honesty in this regard. For

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1. Masudi, I, pp. 383-384.
2. Al-Jahiz, pp. 80-81.
3. Maqbul Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 120; Cf. Marvazi, pp. 53-54; Masudi, *Tanbih*, pp. 38-39.
4. Marvazi, p. 40.
5. Gardizi, p. 627.
6. Al-Biruni, II, p. 161.

the promotion of business Sindhis were selected.[1] Referring to the Gujarat kingdom, Marvazi observes that justice and security prevailed there. Even if gold were thrown on the ground, no one would dare to pick it up. The Arabian merchants visited the country for commerce and dealt with the inhabitants and reported that they were 'honest in business, kind and charitable.'[2] Ibn Rusta also informs us that honesty and justice prevailed in this kingdom. The Arab traders were assured by the king that they needed no escort, as there were no thieves in his realm, and that they would receive compensation if they suffered any loss.[3] About the people of the Gujarat region Al-Idrisi says that the administration of justice among the people of India is in the very nature of the people. They do not rely on any thing except it. They are noteworthy for the excellence of their justice, for keeping their contracts and for the beauty of their character. Indeed, they and all the inhabitants of that land are on a virtuous path.[4] The kingdom of the Cālukyas of Gujarat attracted a large number of Muslim merchants, who received encouragement and protection from the king.[5] The Brāhmaṇa merchants of Lar were renowned for their honesty. Marco Polo in their praise writes, "These Abraiman are the best merchants in the world and most truthful, for they would not tell a lie for any thing on earth."[6] Qazwini mentions that the people of Hind are infidels and value their life and wealth.[7]

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1. Jahiz, p. 80.
2. Marvazi, p. 47. Marvazi further adds, "When their bargain is finished the king sends with (the merchants) some one to protect their good and escort them out of the kingdom." He was more justice-loving. He said to the merchants and travellers, "Go out as you like. If any thing happens to you and if you have any losses take from me as I stand surety for you." (Marvazi, p. 47). Sulayman writes, "There is no country in India more safe from robbers." (Elliot, I, p. 4).
3. Ibn Rusta, p. 52.
4. Idrisi, p. 60.
5. Ibid, p. 60; Cf. Ibn Hauqal, p. 320; Masudi, I, p. 382; Sulayman, *Akhbar*, pp. 12-13.
6. Yule, II, p. 363.
7. Nainar, p 98.

Earlier Hsuan Tsang, while describing the Indians as hasty and irresolute, admits that they were of pure moral principles. They would not take anything wrongfully and would yield more than fairness required. They feared the retribution for sins in other lives; and made light of that conduct produced in this life. They did not practise deceit and kept their sworn obligations. They lived together on good terms and the criminal class was small.[1] Al-Idrisi cites an example testifying to the truthful character of the Indian people. If a man had some claim against another and met him he had only to draw a circular line upon the ground and made his debtor enter it, which the latter never failed to do. The debtor did not leave the circle without satisfying his creditor or obtaining the remission of the debt.[2] Qazwini also confirms it.[3] The accounts of Marco Polo and Ibn Battuta, which are slightly different also confirm the practice.[4]

Sometimes a passage from Al-Biruni is quoted to prove the deep-rooted tendency of the Indian mind towards self-conceit and depreciation of every thing foreign. "The Hindus", he says, "believe that there in no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no king like theirs, no religion like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communicating that which they know and they take the greatest possible care to withhold it from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigner. According to their belief, there is no other country on earth but theirs, no other race of man but theirs, and no created beings besides them have any knowledge or science whatsoever."[5] However, the Hindus are not wholly to blame for their adopting such an attitude. In the face of destruction of their sacred temples and insult to the images of their gods at the hands of Mahmud, they could not but adopt a contemptuous attitude towards the foreigners, particularly the Muslims. In the words of Al-Biruni himself, "Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and ....the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions.......Their scattered remain cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims."[1] The consequences of Mahmud's victory are described by Utbi, the secretary of the Sultan, who "enjoyed excellent opportunities of becoming fully acquainted with the operations of that conqueror."[2] He frankly says that "Islam or death was the alternative that Mahmud placed before the people."[3] "The victors slew the vanquished wherever they were found, in jungles, passes, plains and hills."[4] Elsewhere he says, "The blood of the infidels flowed so copiously that the stream was discoloured, notwithstanding its purity, and people were unable to drink it."[5] The word 'infidel' in the above extract is significant, 'for the only' way to escape this cruel massacre was to embrace Islam."[6] Consequently the Hindus were forced to adopt a policy of complete isolation and aloofness from the Muslims. "A spirit of uncompromising animosity prevailed between the two. The arrogant contempt on the part of the victors, and proud disdain on the part of the vanquished embittered their relations"[7] However, Al-Biruni, at the risk of being accused of using satire, gives probably 'a correct enough description of the temper of the people.'[8] The root cause of the evil, according to the author was the changed habit of the Indians towards foreign travel. "If they travel and mix with other nations", he remarks, "they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not as narrowminded as the present generations."[1] This liberal attitude of the Hindus towards other religions has been noted by other writers. Abu Zayd observes that the kings gave full liberty to other religions [2] The Muslims were provided with every facility to prosecute their religion and erect mosques [3] Muhammad Ufi points out that when some Hindus incited by Parsis destroyed a mosque and killed eighty Muslims at Cambay, the ruling king Siddharāja, on being informed of it, atonce rushed to the spot and punished the guilty persons. He also donated one lac of Balotras to rebuild the mosque.[4] We know from the Jagāḍūcarita that rich merchants had a mosque built for the use of the Muslims.[5] The Veraval inscription also records that an Indian named Raja (Kula) Chāhaḍa paid part of the expenses of a mosque.[6] The friendly attitude of the Rāṣṭrakūta kings towards the Muslims has been recorded by the Muslim writers.[7] On the basis of the contemporary evidences we may reasonably conclude that the Hindus were in general liberal, honest and just and not, as Al-Biruni says, 'haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid.'[8]

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[1] Watters, I, p 171.

[2] Idrisi, p. 60; Elliot, I, p. 88.

[3] Qazwini (*Asarul-Bilad*) Text 55. Tr. p. 197.

[4] Yule, II, pp. 327, 335; Ibn Battuta (*De Fremery*), III, p. 412; *IA*, VIII, p. 2 7; Hodivala, p. 68.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 22-23.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 22.
[2] Elliot, II, p. 14.
[3] Utbi (Sharma), p. 57.
[4] Elliot, II, p. 33.
[5] Ibid, p. 40.
[6] R.C. Majumdar (Ed), *Struggle for Empire*, p. 499.
[7] Ibid, p 502.
[8] Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 231.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 23.

[2] Elliot, I, p. 10.

[3] Majumdar, *Caulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 331; Cf. Tarachand, *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 44.

[4] Elliot, II, pp. 162-164.

[5] *Jagāḍucarita*, VI, v. 64.

[6] *IA*, XI, p. 241; Cf *PIHC*, III (1939), p. 647.

[7] M. Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, pp. 140-143.

[8] Al-Biruni, I, p. 22.

CHAPTER VII

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AND SECTS

With the beginning of the 9th century the Arab travellers and scholars started taking interest in the religious condition of India. For them India was a land of religions, where various beliefs and practices were followed. India was regarded as a source of the then current religions of the East. Sulayman observes that India gave to the Chinese their religion and most of their laws and various forms of idol-worship (in fact Buddhism)[1] Undoubtedly, during the period under consideration, one is struck by diverse religious tendencies in the country. There were various religious sects and sub-sects differing from each other in points of philosophy and rituals. Nevertheless Hinduism was by far the most popular religion in India at this time. Buddhism as a distinct religion and thought had ceased be a force. Hinduism had absorbed and virtually supplanted Buddhism. This was why the foreigners, especially those who believed in an entirely different faith, could not distinguish Buddhism from Hinduism as a separate and distinct religious sect. Its ascetic form, Śramaṇa (Shamani), was specially noticed by the Arabs. Shahrastani mentions Buddhism as one of the three sub-divisions of Hinduism, the other two being tansukh (metempsychosis) and meditation.[2] The progress of Jainism had been arrested. On account of its doctrine of ahimsa, Jainism remained a religion of a particular caste (of the Vaiśyas) and therefore it could not appeal to the masses, and was followed mainly in Rajasthan, Gujarat and Malwa. However, Hinduism had no rival and flourished practically all over the country. It had overshadowed all other religions. In the words of K.M. Panikkar, "by the end of the tenth century Hinduism had asserted its universal supremacy in India, re-

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1. Sulayman, p. 36, *Akhbar*, p 26.
2. Shahrastani, III, p. 240; *JBBRAS*, XIV, 1879-1880, pp. 55-61.

organized its popular doctrines, provided itself with a higher philosophy which found general acceptance among the intellectual classes and absorbed into its fold the religion of Buddha. From Kashmir to Cape Comorin, the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu and the Devi prevailed and the background of philosophy accepted without question the main doctrines of Paramātmā, Jīvātmā, Māyā and reincarnation in a society organized on the basis of caste and the Dharmaśāstras."[1]

As regards the philosophical aspects of Indian religious thought, Al-Biruni's treatment of the subject is more authentic and scholarly. His discussion on Indian beliefs and their philosophical aspects provides a clear picture of the Indian mind during the eleventh century.

Method of Approach

Al-Biruni deals with all categories of Indian thought and all branches of Indian science or knowledge. The first department of thought that he had to consider was religious knowledge. In the treatment of this subject he adopted a comparative method to explain the existing religion of the Hindus. He compares Hindu religious customs and beliefs with the Greek. To quote Al-Biruni, "Therefore I like to confront the theories of the one nation with those of the other simply on account of their close relationship, not in order to currect them. For that which is *not the truth* (i.e., the true belief or monotheism) does not admit of any correction, and all heathenism, whether Greek or Indian, is in its pith and marrow one and the same belief, because it is only a deviation *from the truth.*'[2] In these words he declares his intention of comparing Greek theories because of certain similarities with the Hindu. In dealing with Hinduism he tells us, "I shall place before the readers the theories of the Hindus exactly as they are, and shall mention in connection with them similar theories of the Greeks in order to show the relationship existing between them.'[3] Besides Greek ideas he has also

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1. K.M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History*, (1962 ed.), pp. 101-102.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 24.
3. Ibid, p. 7.

mentioned Sūfi or Christian ideas to have a better understanding of Indian religious doctrines."[1] This task of comparison of ideas has been attempted by Al-Biruni accurately and elaborately.

Religion of the Masses and of the Educated Classes.

In treating of religion Al-Biruni distinguishes between the religion of the vulgar mass and that of the educated class. This distinction extends into even fundamental religious conceptions.[2] He points out, "The educated among the Hindus abhor anthropomorphism of this kind, but the crowd and the members of the single sects use them most extensively. They go even beyond all we have hitherto mentioned, so as to speak wife, son, daughter, of the rendering pregnant and other physical processes, all in connection with God. They are even so little pious, that, when speaking of these things, they do not even abstain from silly and unbecoming language. However, no body minds these classes and their theories, though they be numerous."[3] After this Al-Biruni distinguishes the educated class from the masses. In the first category he puts the Brāhmaṇas, whose belief, according to him, "was the real concept of the religious thought of the Hindus." The main and the most essential point of the Hindu world of thought is that which the Brāhmaṇas think and believe, for they are specially trained for preserving and maintaining their religion."[4] The religion of the educated, he found, had a strong tendency towards monism whereas the popular religion was 'frank and pluralistic and polytheistic.' The uneducated associated their beliefs concerning God with idols. Idol-worship, according to Al-Biruni, was restricted to the low classes of the people, who paid great reverence to the images of the gods. But among the educated classes, who marched on the path of liberation, or those who studied philosophy and theology, and who desired abstract truth which

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p 8.
2. Ibid, p. 27.
3. Ibid, p. 39.
4. Ibid, p. 39.

they called 'Sāra' were 'entirely free from worshipping anything but God alone and would never dream of worshipping an image manufactured to represent him.'[1] The masses associated the joy of paradise and the pains of Hell with the body, but the educated people thought that these two affected soul.[2] So there was a wide gap between the ideas of the two classes of the Indian people and Al-Biruni based his exposition on what he could discover about the Brāhmaṇas, i.e., the educated class believed and thought.

The Two Schools of Thought

According to Shahrastani, after the death of Brāhmaṇas. his followers became divided into two groups or paths—Nivṛtti-mārga, the path of renunciation, and Pravṛtti-mārga, the path ef moderate enjoyment. The first group believed in renunciation and regarded indulgence in worldy pleasures as a great error. A man should not think of procreation which leads to sexuality. They ate as much food as would keep the body living. Fasting and starvation were adopted by some people of this school for expediting their rising to the higher world. "Some people when they think that their life is polluted with evil and cannot be disentangled, throw themselves in fire, by way of purifying the body and spirit."[3] The second group believes in "eating, drinking, sexuality and other pleasures but only to the extent of moderate indulgence. People of this school generally observe this rule. However, there are a few who cannot control themselves increase their demands going beyond what is lawful in moderation."[4]

God

As regards the philosophical conception of God, Al-Biruni quotes the views of Patanjali (as he knew him) in terms that would almost coincide with the conception of Muslim theology. "The Hindus", he says, "believe with regard to God, that he is one, eternal, without beginning and end, acting by free will, almighty, all-wise, living, giving life, ruling, preserving, one who in his sovereignty is unique beyond all likeness and unlikeness, and that he does not resemble anything nor does anything resemble him."[1] He can be perceived by the soul of man and not by his senses. The contemplation of these qualities in the human mind and soul constitute meditation. This meditation is identical with worshipping him exclusively, and by practising it uninterruptedly beatitude is obtained."[2] Al-Biruni then quotes a passage from the Gīta to show that the spiritual knowledge is the striving to become as far as possible similar to God. This is approved of as being consonant with the definitions of Muslim philosophy.[3]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 112-113.

[2] Ibid, p. 63.

[3] Shahrastani, III, p. 264; *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 66,

[4] Ibid.

With the noble philosophical conception of God, Al Biruni goes on to mention the foundation of the Advait School, though none of the Vedantic authors is mentioned by him. On this point he writes, "This is what educated people believe about God They call him Iśvara, i.e. self-sufficing, beneficent, who gives without receiving. They consider the unity of god as absolute, but that every thing beside god which may appear as a unity is really a plurality of things. The existence of God they consider as a real existence because everything that exists exists through him. It is not impossible to think that the existing beings are not that he is, but it is impossible to think that he is not and that they are."[4] In this connection H. Heras says, "Al-Biruni's first statement may appear somewhat confusing to those who know the mind of the ancient Indian sages. The latter clearly says that this plurality of things by which we are surrounded is but an illusion for one who does not see anything else beyond, but all the diverse things lead the wise to see the ultimate reality which is behind them all."[5]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 27.

[2] Ibid, p. 29.

[3] Ibid, p. 63.

[4] Ibid, p. 31.

[5] *Al-Biruni's Commemoration Volume*, p. 179.

But the views of uneducated people about God are somewhat different. "If an educated man", writes Al-Biruni, "calls God a point, an uneducated man imagines God is as small as a point without understanding what the word point conveys. If educated man thinks that God comprehends the universe so that nothing is concealed from him, he will at once imagine that this comprehending is effected by means of eye-sight; that eye-sight is only possible by means of an eye, and that two eyes are better than only one, and in consequence he will describe God as having a thousand eyes, meaning to describe his omniscience."[1] Al-Biruni points out that such hideous fictions were sometimes met with among the Hindus of his time, especially among those castes who were not allowed to occupy themselves with science.[2]

Before we conclude our discussion on the Hindu concept of God it seems necessary to quote the observation of Shahrastani on this point. "They believe that God is pure light but he is hidden in such a way that he can be seen by those persons only who prove themselves worthy of seeing him by spiritual advancement. For instance, if a man puts on the skin of some animal, then in this condition, he can be seen by a man who looks at him. Then he puts off the skin, he cannot be seen as pure light cannot be seen without a medium."[3] Undoubtedly Shahrastani conveys the Hindu idea of God in the sense of sublime light.

Angels and Spirits

According to Al-Biruni, the Hindus believed in the existence of a number of spiritual beings, known as Angels, who were lower than God but higher than mankind. Al-Biruni remarks that the Hindus are people who rarely preserve one and the same order of things, and in their enumeration of things there is much that is arbitrary. They use or invent numbers of names and who is to hinder or to control them ?[4]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 31.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Shahrastani, III, p. 264; *JBBRAS*, XIV, pp. 66-69.

[4] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 89-90.

In his opinion, the Hindus had no clear-cut idea on this subject. It was, according to him, due to the disagreement between the Śankha and the Gīta. Al-Biruni further says that they eat and drink, cohabit and die, but by reason of their nature they can do a great many things which are impossible to be performed by mankind. These spiritual beings are headed by the 'Devas', a word Al-Biruni translates as 'Angels', which may more correctly be translated as 'gods'.[1] They are listed as Deva, Daitya (dānava), Gandharva, Yakṣa, Rākṣas, Kinnara, Nāga, Vidyādhara,[2] may be added the Pitras and Piśācas.[3]

All these spiritual beings are supposed to belong to one category. They have attained their present stage of existence by actions during the time when they were human beings.[4] After the Deva comes the class of the Pitras, the deceased ancestors, and after them the Bhūta, 'human beings who have attached themselves to the spiritual beings (Deva) and stand in the middle between them and mankind.'[5] Among this category comes the Rishi or Siddha or Muni. They are human beings, without being free from the body. They also differ among themselves according to their qualities.[6]

Moksa

Al-Biruni points out the diversity of opinion among the Hindus on the idea of Mokṣa. He writes, "Hindus differ among themselves as to which of these castes (four varṇas) is capable of attaining to liberation; for according to some, only the Brāhmaṇa and Kṣatriya are capable of it, since the other cannot learn the Veda, whilst according to the Hindu philosophers, liberation is common to all castes and to the whole human race, if their intention of obtaining it is perfect."[7]

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1. *Islamic Culture*, I, p. 473.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 91.
3. Ibid, p. 89.
4. Ibid, p. 92.
5. Ibid, p. 93.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, p. 104.

Then he quotes the Gītā and Vyāsa as saying that every one can achieve Mokṣa if he follows the right path. Vyāsa makes no distinction between religions for attaining liberation.[1]

Soul

The Muslim writers of the period were struck by the firm belief of the Hindus in metempsychosis. According to Sulayman, in India and China, people believed in the metempsychosis, although there were some differences as to details.[2] Abu Zayd records that after death (by throwing into fire and drowning in water) the Indians firmly believed they will be reborn.[3] Indians' belief in the transmigration of soul is also recorded by others. Ibn-ul-Faqah notes that all Indians were believers in transmigration.[4] Masudi adds that Indians believed that the soul migrates to other bodies.[5] Shahrastani says that there was no nation (of heretics) which did not believe in transmigration.[6] Belief in the transmigration of soul and the role of Karma in determining successive births are also recorded by Al-Biruni. That the soul is immortal and that it migrates from body to body from one world to other (the worlds of reward and punishment). The migration begins from low stages and rises to higher and better ones.[7] Then he goes on to describe the theory of reward and punishment and the Hindu beliefs about the different worlds (Loka) wherein the soul resides. "The Hindu conception", says Al-Biruni, "divides the world into four, namely, Svargloka, i.e. paradise where man is to receive his rewards, Nāgaloke, the world of the serpents, or hell where he is to receive punishment and the Madhyaloka and Manuṣyaloka wherein we live and have to earn."[8]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p 104.

[2] Sulayman, p. 36; Elliot, I, p 7.

[3] Abu Zayd (*Sup.*), p. 79; Elliot, I, p. 9.

[4] Nainar, p. 134.

[5] Masudi, I, p. 163.

[6] Shahrastani, III, p. 342; Abdul-Qahir Baghdadi (*Al-Farq*, p. 253) says that those who believe in transmigration belong to different category—the philosophers and the Samanis (The Buddhist).

[7] Al-Biruni, I, p. 51.

[8] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 59-63.

Religious Sects and Creeds

According to Minorsky, most of the earlier writers on Indian religions made extensive use of one primary report which was compiled by the envoy sent to India, at the request of Barmakid Yahya b. Khalid at about A.D. 800. The original report and the name of the reporter are not available but its contents can now be restored from the available quotations given by the later Arab writers. Among those who borrowed from the original source were Ibn Khurradadhbih, al-Jayhani, Mutahhar, Marvazi, Gardizi, al-Idrisi and many others.[1] According to this report it seems that there were ninety-nine different sects and cults practised in India in the ninth century. "Stress on numbers is also laid when the castes are described as being sevan in all."[2] Dr. Maqbul Ahmad suggests that the reporter must have been affected by the Pythagorean philosophy and 'may have belonged to an Ismaili sect of the early Islamic period.'[3]

According to Ibn Khurradadhbih there were forty-two sects among the people of Hind.[4] Al-Idrisi, who bases his information on Ibn Khurradadhbih, gives additional information, "The religious denominations of the majority of the Indians comprise 42 sects."[5] Thus, there are among them those who believe in the Creator and the Prophets while there are others who believe in God (Allah) and deny Prophets. Again there are some who reject all. Among them there are those who believe in carved stones as their intermediaries and others who worship heaps of stones;[6] upon which oil and fat is poured and people prostrate themselves before them. There are some of them who worship fire and burn themselves in it. Some of them worship the sun and prostrate themselves

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1. Minorsky (Marvazi), pp. 125-131.
2. Maqbul Ahmad, *Indo-Arab Relations*, p. 108.
3. Ibid.
4. I. Khur, p. 71; Nainar, p. 122.
5. Cf. Ibn Khur, p. 71; Marvazi, Ar. T., p. 28; Mutahhar, p. 9; Gardizi p. 629.
6. Jaubert, I, p. 99 : 'pierres augurales'; Elliot, I, p. 76 : 'holy stones'; Nainar, p. 122, 'heaps of stones'.

before it and believe that it is the Creator and the Ruler of the Universe. Again there are some who worship trees and others who worship serpents, which they keep in enclosures[1] and which they feed with prescribed food, and through which they make entreaties (to God). There are some of them who do not weary themselves with the worship of one object or another, and deny all."[2] It may be pointed out that this information on the broad divisions according to belief and unbelief in God and the Prophets corresponds almost word for word to Ibn Khurradadhbih. According to Dr. Maqbul Ahmad, the remaining portion of the paragraph seems to be an incomplete enumeration on the different forms of worship, the details of which are found in Marvazi, Mutahhar and Gardizi.[3] Idrisi separately mentions the class of water-worshippers. The stone worshippers were worshippers of Śiva, who worshipped Liṅga (phallus) i.e. the image symbol of Śiva.[4] Fire-worshippers referred to here stood for the sect which performed 'Agnihotra', 'an oblation to Agni.'[5] The worshippers who burnt themselves in fire might be identified with those who committed suicide by burning themselves or with women who practised Satī after the death of their husbands. Probably Idrisi confused the pure worshippers of fire with this sect.[6]

The sun-worshippers were probably the Ādityabhaktas, 'the worshippers of Āditya', the sun being one of the Ādityas.[7] As regards tree-worshippers, Shahrastani also refers to Barkashikiyya (Vṛkṣa-bhaktiya). The adepts of this sect chose one of the tallest and most luxuriant trees growing in the mountains, hollowed out in it a niche for their idol and then prostrated themselves before the tree and circumambulated it.[1] Serpents are associated with the Nāgas, a mythological race, half human and half serpent, who dwell beneath the earth, and with Śeṣanāga on which Viṣṇu sleeps during part of the year.[2] Al-Biruni describes the Nāgas as one of the eight classes of spiritual beings.[3]

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[1] Jaubert, I, p. 99, has 'etables' and Elliot, I, p. 76, following him, 'Stable'. There is another reading of the passage : " They surround them in groups of men and feed them" etc., which does not seem to be appropriate here. (Idrisi, fn. 5, p. 38).

[2] Idrisi, pp. 38-39.

[3] Maqbul Ahmad (Idrisi), p. 147.

[4] Ibid, p. 148; Nainar, p. 122.

[5] Ibid, p 148; Cf. Minorsky (Marvazi), I, p. 32 and p. 138.

[6] Maqbul Ahmad (Idrisi, p. 148); Cf. Gardizi, p. 636; Marvazi, p. 138; Shahrastani, III, pp. 455-456.

[7] Barnett, *Antiquities of India*, (London, 1913), p. 18; Cf. Shahrastani, *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 63; Gardizi, p. 637; Nainar p. 125, note 71

According to Mutahhar, there are in India 900 creeds. Of these 99 are known and can be reduced to 42, the latter following into 4 categories, and two classes, namely, Buddhists (Samaniya, as in Marvazi) who deprive God of attributes and Barahmani (Brāhmaṇas). The latter are of three classes (the text is disturbed). It is said in conclusion, "All those who do not believe in apostolate and the Beyond do believe in recompense and punishment through transmigration and metempsychosis."[4] The same basis of classification is recognisable in Gardizi and in Marvazi.

Among these writers al-Marvazi[5] supplies a detailed account of Indian religion. He enumerates ninety-nine creeds grouped under forty-four religions. "Of the latter some recognise the Creator and believe in prophets (anbiya), but others, though confirming the existence of a Creator, reject (God) apostles (rasul)[6] and prophets; others again reject both a Creator and apostles and some reject every thing but confirm the truth of retribution and punishment, and these are the Shamans (Buddhists).”[1] “There are some who say that Retribution and Punishment consist in rebirth, in happiness or in misfortune, and that Paradise and the Fire and apportioned to ones action and are not lasting.”[2]

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[1] Shahrastani, *JBBRAS*, p. 65; *Hindustan*, II, p. 80; Minorsky (Marvazi), p 130; Cf. Williams, pp. 330-339.

[2] Barnett, *op.cit.*, pp. 47-48; Williams, pp. 233, 237, 319-26.

[3] Al-Biruni, I, p. 91.

[4] Mutahhar, p. 18.

[5] The account of Marvazi on Indian sects is also mentioned by many Arab writers on India. Gardizi's account is almost identical with that of Marvazi and Gardizi bases his information on Jayhani. (Gardizi. p. 629).

[6] According to Minorsky, in the authors idea the gods Viṣṇu and Śiva are 'envoys' of the invisible God. To preserve this special point of view and the etymology of rasul (from arsala) he has rendered the term conventionally as 'apostle'. (Marvazi, fn. 2, p. 40).

Basdiw : The Sect of Vasudeva

The Brāhmaṇas are counted among those who believed in the Creator and thought that Vāsudeva (Basdiw) was God's Apostle, who came to them in human shape as an envoy of God but without a (divine) book. “They say that (Vāsudeva) ordered them to make an idol representing him which they worship and circumambulate three times a day, with music and burning of incense.”[3] Vāsudeva, according to the Hindu belief, has four hands, in one he holds a bare sword, in another a ploughshare, in the third a weapon called Shakr, which has the shape of a large ring with sharp edges, in the fourth a noose. He is seated on a giant bird (Ianqa') and has 12 heads, each resembling an animal.”[4] The followers of the sect also worshipped cows and could not cross the Gaṅgā.[5] Gardizi adds that if any one left their order, he could not be readmitted except after he had made himself clean and they had purified him.[6] These commandments are also mentioned by Shahrastani. Undoubtedly, these were the adepts of Vāsudeva or Viṣṇu.[7] During this period Viṣṇu rose to the rank of a supreme deity. In the Puranic times the three streams of religious thoughts, namely, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa and

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1. Marvazi, p. 40 (17).
2. Ibid, p. 40 (18); Cf. Gardizi, p. 629 (10).
3. Ibid, p. 49 (20); Gardizi, p. 630 (11).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Gardizi, p. 630; Cf. Shahrastani III, p, 247, who mentions Basaviyah. His account is similar to the descriptions of Marvazi and Gardizi. He adds, “According to his teaching falsehood, wine, eating with others and slaugh- ter of animals are forbidden, but formication is allowed for the permanence of the race.” He also taught them to put on sacred thread over the left shoulder and hanging below the right shoulder. Cf. *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 61.
7. Barnett, *op. cit*, p. 30.

Vāsudeva mingled together and formed the later Vaiṣṇavism.[1] The large number of epigraphic records indicate that Vaiṣṇavism made rapid progress during the early medieval period. A number of images of Viṣṇu have been discovered in northern India. Vaiṣṇavism was a prominent sect of Brahmanism. Many Viṣṇu temples were constructed and icons of Viṣṇu were installed in the temples by various names.[2] Khajuraho is still a famous centre of Viṣṇu temples.

Mahadaviya : The Sect of Mahadeva

In the category of those who believed in the Creator also come the Mahadaviya (the adepts of Mahādeva). They were forbidden to kill animals, to marry and to acquire property, their sustenance depended on alms. They have been described as wonderful magicians.[3] According to the followers of this sect, as Marvazi informs us, Mahādeva (as God's envoy) approached them in human form riding on a bull, and wearing a crown surmounted by bones of the dead and a similar necklace. In one of his hands he held a human skull and in another a three pointed lance. He fanned himself with a fan made of peacock's feathers. The followers of Mahādeva used to wear necklaces of human bones, caps of the same kind and smear their faces and bodies with ashes. They dressed themselves from waist to feet with rags, two-finger broad and having the length from their ankles to their waists, dyed in various colours forming whole pieces, sewn only at the waist.[4] Gardizi provides more information about the followers of this sect. "They mostly walk in fields and deserts, but when they enter a village they praise God with shouts because he is the Creator of Mahādeva. They agitate the drum with one hand and then praise Mahādeva in verse and in songs (Shir-u lahn) in which they invite people not to desire the world so

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1. Vasudeva Upadhyaya, *Socio-Religious Condition of Northern India*, p. 208.
2. Ibid, pp. 211-216.
3. Marvazi, p. 41 (20); Gardizi, p. 631 (12).
4. Ibid.

that people gather round (them) and to the sound of the bells attached to his feet dogs began to howl."[1]

The Kabaliya (Kapalika)

They pretended that their apostle was an angel called Shib (Śiva) who approached them in human form, smeared with ashes and wearing on his head a red felt cap (qalansuwa) three spans high with parts of human skulls sewn on to it, his necklace, belt, bracelets and ankle-rings being of human bones. In one hand he held a human skull and in the other a drum similar to that of the Mahādeva. He ordered them to make a round object in the shape of a phallus, two cubits long and a cubit in diameter, and called sh.bl. nd (Śivaliṅga) which means 'The apostle's phallus'. He told them to worship this object, because they assumed that the cause of procreation in the world is the phallus so they used to go about naked wearing only the above mentioned cap.[2] On this subject Gardizi's description supplies some more information. He writes, "They go about in the likeness of Shib (Śiva) suspending to their phallus a large bell such as prevents them from any intercourse with women. Men or women meeting them prostrate themselves before (it ?) and venerate them (it ?) and thus seek to approach God. They bring them as guests and seat them on chairs in view of the heaviness of the bell which (they wear). Then they fumigate his phallus with incense, while he blesses them, and they say : "may the Almighty apportion to us part or your merit." Their livelihood consists of alms and they are stark naked. Some of them perforate their bodies and insert into them rings made of copper, tin or iron until the body shines like a (lacuna)".[3]

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[1] Gardizi, p. 632 (12); Cf. Shahrastani, III, p. 240; Mutahhar, IV, pp. 13-14. Both use the term Bahudiya or Bhabhudia. It is very difficult to identify it with Mahadaviya, but the description given by these two writers resemble the accounts of Marvazi and Gardizi. However, it appears to be a Śaiva sect.

[2] Marvazi, p 42 (21); Gardizi, p. 632 (13).

[3] Gardizi, p 632 (13); Cf. Marvazi, p. 42. Mutahhar and Shahrastani also write aboat the Kāpālika (Kapaliya) sect

The two sects Mahadeviya and Kabaliya worshipped the same god Śiva in two different ways. His attributes, as mentioned by these writers, are almost identical with the beliefs of the Hindus.[1] According to Minorsky, the identity of the god would have been easily established through some literary source, 'but the original traveller preferred to describe separately the practices of two sub-sects just as he apparently witnessed them.'[2]

The Ramaniya

According to Marvazi, they are the adepts of Raman (Rāma), who was a tyrannical king and oppressed the people. He pretended to be ('God's ?) envoy and ordered his people to worship him, saying that it was conductive to the Creator's pleasure.[3]

The Ravaniya : Adepts of Ramana

"The Ravaniya said that by Ravans' intermediary they sought the guidance of the Creator who accepted (Ravan's) repentance and gave him a lance. So they made Ravana their prophet."[4] Gardizi mentions only the sect of Ramani. He relates the story of the abduction of Sita by Ravana and his death at the hands of Rāma.[5] Al-Biruni also refers to this story, which is based on Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa.[6] But Marvazi records the tyranny of Rama, which he received from some aberrant version of the famons story of the Rāmāyaṇa. According to Minrosky, this is similar to the version of Buddhist and Jain sources, according to which Rāvaṇa was a great sage and Sītā was his daughter.[7]

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in brief, which is identical with the descriptions of Marvazi and Gardizi Mutahhar, IV, pp. 13-14, Shahrastani, III, p. 248, *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 6 .

[1] Barnett, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

[2] Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 133.

[3] Marvazi p 42 (22).

[4] Ibid, p. 42 (23). Mutahhar only quotes the names of the Ramani and Ravani, Shahrastani omits them altogether. In the *Fihrist* all the categories have been left out.

[5] Gardizi, pp. 632-633 (14).

[6] Al-Biruni, I, Ch. XXX.

[7] Cf. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, I, p. 514.

No Faith in the Prophets

They did not believe in God's envoys and affirmed that God had invited the people to worship Him and made them independent of anybody, so that "they should not do to any one what they themselves do not accept from other people. And this is their law set in their minds. God needs only to be worshipped by them."[1] They emphasised that Paradise was to be reached by the exertion of the mind and by apposing the nature of the body. Some of them maintained that the body should be tortured 'with various torments during which no leisure is left out for revolt and no tendency to frivolity.'[2]

Gardizi also refers to those who rejected prophets.[3] Probably these writers had in mind Buddhists (Shamani), who did not believe in prophets[4] Mutahhar, however, takes no notice of them.

There were some who pretended that the attainment of right and the attack upon (hujum) the true Reality consisted in the destruction of the body 'and in liberation on therefrom, for souls (abiding in it) are accessible to all kinds of sins while they embellish anything wicked impede any thing noble.'[5]

There were some who belonged to the class of Rishiya (sages), who had annihilated their passions. They claimed that angels appeared to them and acquired from them all that was profounded in books, morals and especially in magic. They lived in the mountains and took only fruits (berries ?) and herbs. All their lives they remained 'with their eyes closed revolving their meditations.'[6] Among this class,

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1. Marvazi, p. 42 (24).
2. Ibid.
3 Gardizi, p. 633 (15).
4. Marvazi, p. 41 (17), p. 46 (43); Gardizi, p. 630 (10 b).
5. Marvazi, p. 43 (25); Gardizi, p. 633 (16) on the destruction of the body, see Suicide, pp. 202-212.
6. Marvazi, p. 43 (26); Gardizi, p. 633 (17).

Gardizi mentions, philosophers who had the knowledge of astronomy, medicine and other sciences and used their senses perpetually to that purpose (tadbir).[1] Al–Biruni mentions Rishis who excelled the angels on accunt of their knowledge.[2]

The N. Kriniya (Nigada Bandha ?)

The N. Kriniya (Nigada Bandha ?) i.e. 'Those fettered in iron.' According to Marvazi they shaved their heads and beards and of their bodies hid only the privy parts. They plated their waists upto the breasts with iron in order that their bellies might not burst from the abundance of learning. They did not teach or speak to any one until he had embraced their religion.[3]

The K. Nkabatriya (Ganga Yatriya)

They were found all over the country. According to their customs, whenever a man had committed a sin, or disobeyed one of his parents or done anything wicked, he had to make a pilgrimage to the Gaṅgā and wash himself in the water. Therein lay the purification of his sin. If he died on that journey his repentance was accepted.[4] According to Minorsky this refers to a practice, not to any particular sect.[5] The holiness of the Gaṅgā was recognised throughout India.

The Rajtaritiya (Raja-Martya ?)

They were the king's party, whose religion was to serve the king and to strengthen his power. They were good in fighting with swords and bucklers, were stubborn fighters, 'the least easily wearied and the most contented with little until the time of remuneration (comes)."[1] According to H.W. Bailey, they 'were king's men' or 'rajanyas', men of Kṣatriya caste.[2] Dr. Barnett suggests the derivation of rajabartiya from rājevṛtti, "the conduct of asking or having a livelihood from a king."[3] According to the Fihrist, they declare, 'God has installed the kings, and if we are killed while obeying them, we shall go to Paradise."[4]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 43 (26); Gardizi has a long paragraph on the Rishis.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 93; Cf. Mutahhar, IV, p. 12 (T. 14); Shahrastani, III, p. 443.

[3] Marvazi, p. 43 (27); Gardizi, p. 634 (18) on this point there are variants offered by the Fihrist and Shahrastani; Cf. Marvazi, text, p. 52; Ferrend, p. 127; Holtezmann in Harbrucker, II, pp. 361 and 440.

[4] Marvazi, p. 43 (28); Gardizi, p. 634 (19); *Fihrist*, p. 183, "Those practising the Ganga Yatra, i.e. pilgrimage to the Ganges."

[5] Marvazi, (Minorsky), p. 131.

The Bhadr Riya

Accrding to their custom, they used to let their hair grow long and let it fall equally on all sides of their heads, while they looked from under it. They used to wear the qaba (long mantle), with their hands out of the sleeves which hanged before and behind them. They kept their chests and backs naked and girded their waists with chains. Each of them was accompanied by another who held the said chain in his hand and prevented him from running amuck when he could become violent, owing to religious ecstasy. They did not drink wine. They used to go on pilgrimage to a mountain called Jurghar to lament B. Hadrz and gloryfy Jun who created the earth from B. Hadrz's skin, the mountains from his bones, the waters from his blood and the trees and plants from his hair. According to them there were three brothers B. Hadrz, Jun and M. Rsh.[5] The idontification of this sect is very difficult, though there are references to it in Gardizi, Shahrastani, Ibn Nadim and Mutahhar.[6]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 43 (29); Gardizi, 634 (20).

[2] Gardizi (Minorsky), 634 fn. 2.

[3] Marvazi (Minorsky), p. 134.

[4] Ibn Nadim, pp. 349, 490; See Sacrifices for the Kings, pp. 212-214.

[5] Marvazi, p. 43 (30); Gardizi, pp. 634-635 (21).

[6] Maravazi text, p. 52; Cf. Minorsky (Marvazi) pp. 134-135; Nainar, p. 127; Nadvi, p. 168; Ibn Nadim, p. 484; Mutahhar IV, p. 15; Gardizi, p. 634 (21); Shahrastani, III, p. 244, Shahrastani adds his own criticism, "They believe that they see in iron qualities which are the same as they find in their own reason and imagination, otherwise how can iron save belly from bursting and how can the belly burst with excess of knowledge (III, p. 244, *JBBRAS*, XIV, pp. 64-65).

The Sect of Idol Worshippers

THE MAHAKAL NKIYA (MAHAKALIYA) : The followers of this sect worshipped an idol called Mahākāla, which they believed was a devil (ifrit), worthy of worship on account of his great power. The idol had four hands, was of blue complexion, had long hair, with grinning teeth, a naked belly and an elephant skin on his back from which blood streamed. In both of his ears there were snakes.[1] Gardizi adds, that in India they built many temples (to him) and that the followers of this religion visited the temple daily, prostrated themselves before the idol representing (Mahā-Kāl) and circumambulated him. They had a place called Ujjain (spelt Aj.r) with a large idol representing (Mahā-Kāl). They did wonderful things saying that they all were from (Mahā-Kāl's) teaching. Men used to come before him and said, "Give me this woman, or give me that thing." For several days they refrained from food and humbled themselves asking him for their needs. Some took an iron lamp and shaping its bottom like a spear placed it on their palm and pressed it until it had pierced the palm and made a hole in it. Then they lit the lamp and knelt down on both knees before the idol with lamentation, saying 'Accept from us our visit to this house'.[2]

Ibn Nadim and Shahrastani also give a detailed description of this sect.[3] Mutahhar too mentions the sect of Mahā-Kāliya and its god Mahā-Kāla and rocords that people used to come on pilgrimage for the fulfilment of their desires and necessities (Hajat), believing that the god would fulfil them.[4]

The Mahākāliya sect is without doubt the Śaiva sect. This is male god and not a female god, Mahākālī, as supposed by Nainar.[5] The association of the elephant skin with the idol, makes it clear that it is Śiva 'Krittivasa', which is an epithet of Śiva. Kālidāsa has given the description of the Mahākāla temple at Ujjain in his Meghadūta.[1] The destruction of this temple by Iltutmish proves that Ujjain was the centre of the Śaiva sect of Mahākāla worshippers. Al-Biruni also mentions the temple of Mahākāl at Ujjain.[2] From the name of Mahākāla, Ujjain was surnamed Mahākālavana.[3]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 44 (31).

[2] Gardizi. p. 635 (22).

[3] Ibn Nadim, p. 488; Shahrastani, III, p. 254, *JBBRAS*, XIV, pp. 64-65.

[4] Mutahhar, IV, p 15.

[5] Nainar, p. 124 and fn. 70, pp. 124-125.

The Divathriya (?)

One of their customs was to make an idol and carry it on wheels, with a high canopy over it. They pulled the chariot and went round the crowds, playing on stringed instruments and performing various games. At that time most of the courtesans put in an appearance. Before them walked crowds while they were seated on elephants and horses decked with many precious jewels. This took place in the spring time. Then they put the idol back in its place. To this idol belonged a treasury containing masks of human faces and of animals, birds and ferocious beasts. On the day of festivity men put on these masks, and when it was over these things were returned to the treasury.[4] Mutahhar and Shahrastani do not mention this sect. The conspicuous features of the festival are its connection with the spring, the parade of courtesans and the display of masks held on this occasion. Dr. Barnett suggests the term 'Deva-yātrā' which means, 'a procession with images of gods', without any special connection with a definite sect.[5] Minorsky identifies it with Al-Biruni's Gauritrittiya, which is holy to Gauri,[6] i.e. Devi, the wife of Śiva. "As the goddess represents the female energy, this would explain the parade referred to in our text. The name Gauri pertains to the milder aspect of Devī, who,

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1. Bāṇa to refers too the temple of Mahākāla at Ujjain (*Kādambarī*, p. 100).
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 202.
3. Nandu Lal De, *Geographical Dictionary of Ancient and Medieval India*, p. 210.
4. Marvazi, p. 44 (32); Gardizi, p. 635 (23).
5. Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 137.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 288.

under her terrible aspect, is called Kāli. The name of the sect may perhaps be derived Devi Yatra."[1]

The Bh. K. Rbiya (Da Kbi Niya ?)

One of their customs was to make an idol in the shape of woman with a crown on her head. When the sun had entered Libra in the Zodiac they used to hold a great wedding ceremony and festival before that idol, gathering garments, boughs of trees and various perfumes. They brought sacrificial animals, such as sheep, cows[2] and buffaloes, and threw hay before them. As soon as their heads were lowered they stroke their necks with swords before the idol. They also treacherously killed, as a sacrifice to the idol, whoever they came across. As to their king, they seized a fair-haired man with blue eyes and fixed in front of the idol a dagger, or some such thing, and order the man whose shoulders were bound, to prostrate himself before the idol over the dagger. When his forehead had touched the dagger they dealt a blow on his head so that the dagger penetrated through his forehead into his head, well into the brain. Their belief was that by this procedure they would obtain a reward both in this world and the next. Then they paid homage (to the martyr), they manifested great joy, had amusements (lahw) and games, ate and drank.[3] The followers of this sect are mentioned in brief by Mutahhar and Shahrastani as Thakniya or Dhakiniya.[4] Mutahhar adds that on that occasion the followers of this sect sacrificed slaves and female slaves along with people in general. Therefore the weak and invalid people used to hide lest the goddess might order their murder.[5] From the above description it is quite evident that the followers of this sect were no other than the worshippers of Durgā or Kālī. According to Gardizi the goddess had a crown on her head and possessed four hands, one of them touching (?) a nail, and one drawing a sword, the other two holding a vajra (Bajra) and a chakra disc (cakra).[1] The sect was despised by Indians. "We may imagine that the ceremonies described were a part of the bloody Tantrick cults which were practised in her honour."[2] It is also possible that the mis-spelt name had some simpler form, like 'devi-bhaktiya' (?).[3]

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[1] Minorsky (Marvazi), pp. 137-138; Cf. J. Dowson : *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, p. 86.

[2] Cows are not mentioned by Gardizi and others, presumably because they were not killed and the killer of the cow was punished with death as noticed by Muslim writers.

[3] Marvazi, pp. 44-45 (33); Gardizi, p. 636 (24).

[4] Mutahhar, IV, p. 15; Shahrastani, p. 225.

[5] Ibid, III, p. 15.

The Jalabhaktiya (Jala-Bhakta)

They were worshippers of water. According to them, water had an angel who was believed to be the foundation of life and through him were secured duration, prosperity, procreation and purity. A man entered the water upto his waist and stayed there for a couple of hours or more, holding in his hand aromatic plants. Then he cut them into small pieces and threw one piece after the other into the water while he praised God and recited prayers. When he wanted to go away he took some water and poured it over his head and on the parts of his body, which were out of the water. Then he prostrated himself before the water and departed.[4] Mutahhar and Shahrastani mention this sect of worshippers of water as 'Jalhkiyya'.[5] The term 'Angel of the water' seems to refer to the Vedic God Apam Napat, "Offering of the Waters" or "to the various Apa-goddesses, mothers of Agni, endowed with fertilising and purifying powers."[6] Though Jala bhaktiya is not a separate sect now, worshipping of sacred rivers like the Ganga is a well-known custom.

The Aknhutriya (Agni-Hotra)

They were the worshippers of fire. They dug a square pit for the fire, gathered over it, and turned round it while

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1. Gardizi, p. 636 (24).
2. Minorsky, (Marvazi), p. 138; Cf. Barnett, *op.cit.*, p. 27.
3. Ibid.
4. Marvazi, p. 45 (34); Gardizi, p 636 (26).
5. Mutahhar, IV, p. 15; Shahrastani, III, p. 255, *JBBRAS*, XIV, pp. 65-66.
6. Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 138; Cf. Barnett, *op.cit.*, p. 19.

they threw into it food, clothes, perfumes, gold, silver and jewels, whatever they had found. They said that the fire was the noblest of the four elements. They blamed the person who had burnt himself with fire, because he had polluted the fire thereby.[1] Mutahhar also writes that people did not burn their dead, because, according to their belief, the fire would lose its sanctity.[2] But Gardizi commits an error in adding that these fire worshippers affirmed that he who burnt himself with fire purified himself of all impurities while the fire became exalted (buzurg).[3] Shahrastani, in a separate paragraph, adds that the above people, the ascetics and devoted worshippers, sat round the fire, kept fast with their mouth closed so that the breath of the person fasting might not reach others. These people persuaded others to practise good morals, and leave bad habits, falsehood envy, ill will, greed and evil. They believed when a man was free from these, he attained the nearness of fire.[4] Agnihotra is still a sect. This refers to those who perform an oblation to Agni.[5]

Jandrihkiniya (Worshippers of Moon)

According to them the moon was an angel, and, in his honour, they made an idol on wheels which was drawn by four animals. In the hand of the idol there was a jewel. They used to fast half of each month and break their fast only on seeing the new moon. At that time they went up the roof-tops, burnt perfumes and looked at the moon. Then they come down, broke their fast and played and danced before the idol.[6] Marvazi does not mention the Sanskrit term for the sect but other sources indicate that it is to be restored as "Candrabhakta". Ibn Nadim's version of the original is more complete. He calls the jewel held by the Chandra-Kant, i.e, Candra-Kanta a jewel formed of congealed moon rays and says that the chariot was drawn by four ducks (butut).[1] Shahrastani also describes this sect and adds that the wrshippers of the moon believed that the moon was one of the angels, therefore, he deserved respect and adoration.[2] However, the fasting for the moon is even now observed. It is called Candrāyaṇa Vrata.[3]

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[1] Marvazi, p. 45 (35); Gardizi, p. 636 (26).

[2] Mutahhar, IV, pp. 15-16.

[3] Gardizi, p. 636 (26).

[4] Shahrastani, III, p. 256, *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 66; Cf. *Hindustan*, II. p 84.

[5] Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 138; Cf. Barnett, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

[6] Marvazi, p. 45 (36); Gardizi, p, 636 (27). Gardizi mentions the sect as J.ndr rbhaktiyan and understands Butt (ducks) as but (idols); cf. Minorsky, (Marvazi), p. 139.

The Dinikitiya (Worshippers of Sun)

The worshippers of the Sun made an idol in its honour drawn by four horses. In the hand of the idol there was some object of the colour of fire. According to them, the Sun was an angel. They approached the idol with prostrations, circumambulations, burning perfumes and playing on various instruments. The idol had estates and revenues, and in that connection they told all sorts of terrifying and impious stories.[4] Gardizi clearly mentions Awtbhaktiya (Āditya-Bhakta) and adds that the sick used'to come and fast before the idol for a day and night and they were told that their wish had been fulfilled, and then they broke their fast. There were two of these idols, one of which was pulled down by Mahmud and the other still remained in Hindustan.[5] This sect is mentioned by Ibn Nadim.[6] and Shahrastani Shahrastani writes that the worshippers of the Sun believed that it possessed both spirit and reason (Nafs wa aql). From him the whole world got light. He was the king of the Heavens and so he was worthy of greatness, sacredness, prostration, prayer, presents and supplication.[7] In India the worship of Sun is very old. There were many temples

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1. Nainar, p. 126; Nadvi, p. 169.
2. Shahrastani, III, p. 489; *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 63.
3. Cf. Al-Biruni, II, p. 173.
4. Marvazi, p. 45 (37).
5. Gardizi, p. 637 (28); for the Arabic form of the sect see Marvazi text, p. 52 line 14.
6. Ibn Nadim, p. 488; Cf. Nainar, p. 126.
7. Shahrastani, III, p. 255; *JBBRAS*, XIV, p. 63.

dedicated to the Sun, of which Multan's Sun Temple was an important one.[1]

The Bha-Braniya (?)

They followed a strange custom. One of the followers entered the graves and brought out a dead body in the most horrible condition, for they did not bury their dead properly. Then he entered the town, called the people to gather and reapproached them with the words, "Oh, ye sinful rebels captured by your passions and enslaved by your habits, how long will you marry your mothers and kill your fathers ?" and so on.[2] Gardizi mentions them as Muhbr. fti (?).[3] Sir R. Burn thought the name might be 'Maha-Brahmanan', a despised section of Brāhmaṇas who dealt in funerary rites, which is somewhat doubtful.[4] Gardizi's form, according to Dr. Barnett suggests mahāprāpti, 'great good fortune' (?), but nothing else, as Minorsky remarks, could be found on these Indian Saronarolas.[5]

The Jirambaradhara (Cirambaradhara)

They were wearers of bark garments, i.e. they dressed themselves in the leaves of a tree, which was called J. br. (Cīra ?). The leaves were as large as loose garments. They did not mingle with other people and exposed themselves to wind and rain, saying, "We undergo all this in exchange for the breeze of Paradise, for the enjoyment in it (Paradise) of the large eyed Huris and for the garments of Paradise."[6] Only Marvazi refers to "those dressed in tree leaves." H.W. Bailey thinks that it may be cīra-ambaradhara (wearer of bark garments).[7] Al-Biruni, while describing the third period of a Brāhmaṇa's life, writes that he 'does

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1. See Multan.
2. Marvazi, p. 46 (38).
3. Gardizi, 637 (29).
4. Ibid, fn. 3, p. 637.
5. Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 139.
6. Marvazi, p. 46 (39).
7. Minorsky (Marvazi), p, 148.

not take shelter under a roof, nor wear any dress, but some bark of a tree simply sufficient to cover the loins."[1] But Marvazi speaks of 'leaves' and not of 'bark'. It is difficult to identify this sect.

The Amirk Jariya (Mriga-Cara)

They were "those resembling wild animals", walked on all fours and fed on herbs, with their mouths. They did not shave their heads and used no artifices for satisfying their needs as if they were beasts.[2] H. W. Bailey suggests the Samskrit 'mṛga-cara' for this sect.[3] Sulayman also refers to a class of Indians who roamed in the woods and mountains, ate herbs and wild fruits and wore rings to prevent the possibility of intercourse with women.[4]

Apart from these, there were those who entered fire and water and applied hot stones to their bodies, some starved themselves to death, some of them roamed in deserts until they were dead, some threw themselves from a high mountain in their country on a sort of tree made of iron with sharpened boughs and branches and got themselves cut into pieces. Marvazi mentions these under nasty ways and beliefs.[5] These clearly refer to the suicidal practices mentioned by Gardizi, and dealt with in a special chapter by Mutahhar.[6]

Gardizi mentions two more sects, which were called Muni, i.e. 'the silent' and Niksi (?) i.e. 'those seaking the road to Paradise'. According to the belief of the first sect, the followers did not harm or pain any body nor did they speak to any one. They ate whatever food they could get, except meat, and did not marry.[7] The other sect was Niksi. Dr. Barnett suggests for this sect the term "Mumukṣī", seekers of salvation.[1] They plunged themselves into thought and for a time remained in that state.[2]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I.

[2] Marvazi, p. 46 (40); Gardizi, p. 637 (30).

[3] Minorsky (Marvazi), p. 140.

[4] Sulayman, p. 32.

[5] Marvazi, p. 46 (41-42).

[6] Gardizi, pp. 638-640 (34-42), Mutahhar, IV, pp. 16-18, See *Suicide*.

[7] Gardizi, p. 637 (31).

Other Sects

One of the sects called Anshanniya or Anshiyan has been mentioned by Ibn Nadim and Gardizi. The followers starved themselves to death by abstaining food and drink.[3] According to Mutahhar, there were people called Nashidiya. The sect consisted of monotheist Brāhmaṇas who believed that God sent an angel in the form of man, whose name was Nashid. He had four hands. In one he held a sword, in the other a weapon like Cuirass called śakti, in the third he held another weapon called shakrat, in the fourth he had reins. He rode on a mare. He had twelve heads, namely, those of a man, of a horse, of a lion, of a bull, of a valture, of an elephant, of a boar and others. He ordered his followers to worship and respect fire, because God honoured fire by giving it an exalted place, light and beauty, and bestowed on it causes (sabab) for the benefit of the world. He stopped them from killing, drinking wine, but allowed fornication. He instructed them to worship cows, and urged them not to go across the Gaṅgā to other countries, because the Brāhmaṇa who crossed the Gaṅgā lost his religion (Dīn). It was not legal to make converts to this sect. It was restricted to those who belonged to it from oldest times, and their descendants.[4]

Ibn Nadim mentions another unnamed sect, whose followers use to grow long hair, which surrounded their faces and covered the heads, the hair on all sides being of the same length. These people did not drink wine. They had a hill Hawran, to which they used to go on pilgrimage. On this hill there was a big temple which had an image. On returning from the pilgrimage, they ran away from women and did not enter "the inhabited places".[1] Among the miscellaneous sects Mutahhar includes those who worshipped certain objects, for example, the sun, the leopard (lion), their own kings, etc. They had their own customs, claims and opinions[2].

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[1] Minorsky (Gardizi), fn. 5, p. 637.

[2] Gardizi, p. 637 (32).

[3] Ibn Nadim, p. 348; Cf. Brockhans in *Fihrist* II, p. 183; Nainar, p 127; Mutahhar, IV, 17 (21); Gardizi, p. 639 (39).

[4] Mutahhar, IV, p. 13.

The above accounts of Muslim writers on Indian religious sects and beliefs, though interesting, are quite confusing. It appeared to them that India had many religions. They failed to understand that all the existing religious practices were rather various ways of worship and not separate religions. of a monolithic character, which has been rightly given the name of Hinduism.[3]

Buddhism

Buddism during this period was a declining religion in India. It was eclipsed by Hinduism to such an extent that Al-Biruni, inspite of his enlightened curiosity, had to confess, "I have never found a Buddhistic book, and never knew a Buddhist from whom I might have learned their theories on this subject (i.e. Mount Meru), all I related of them I can only relate on the authority of Aleranshahri,[4] though according to my mind, his report has no claim to scientific exactness, nor is it the report of a man who has a scientific knowledge of the subject."[5] India, as far as known to Al-Biruni, was Brahmanic and not Buddhistic. He knew little about Buddhism and his observations are scanty and are based on second-hand sources. Like other writers he calls them Shamaniyya, and adds that though they cordially hate the Brahmanas, still are nearer akin to them than to others. In former times they were found in Iraq, Mosal, Syria, but with the spread of Magism and Islam they emigrated to the countries east of Balkh.[6] Mentioning the trinity of Buddhism, i.e. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, he calls the Buddha 'Buddhodana', perhaps mistakenly for something like the son of Suddhodana.[1] The Buddhists belonged to the sect of red robe-bearers.[2] According to Shahrastani Buddhism was regarded as one of the three sub-divisions of Hinduism (i.e. Brāhmaṇas). They were called ashab al-Bidada (Buddhists). "They put on red dress. By the Buddha they mean that individuality and existence which never express himself in birth nor does he marry, nor drinks and eats, neither grows old nor dies."[3] He was born 5,000 years before Muhammad in the Syakin (sakya) world. This word means a man of noble birth.[4] They believed that after the status of Buddha was the status of Bodhisattva (al-budisitiya), which meant 'men seeking the path of truth'. Then he enumerates accurately the ten sins and the ten virtues, "one should exercise patience, charity of things, which one keeps dear and which one likes; renunciation of the things of worldly interests and separation from them, to keep oneself innocent and free from pollution and indulgence in things which are hateful and forbidden, love towards all created beings; to keep away from ten sins, which are to kill any living being; to think lawful what belongs to other, to speak untruth, to abuse, to speak harsh words, to give bad names to person, foolishness, to deny the punishment for sins and the dooms day. One should cultivate ten virtues. Charity and generosity, keeping away from evil, to check anger by patience, to leave worldly desires, to try to get away from this world and to attain the immortal world, to brighten intelligence with knowledge, to look to the ends of all affairs, to employ oneself and keep the strength in fact for getting at the high things, to keep the softness of the heart and to speak kind words, to maintain good social rela-

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[1] Ibn Nadim, p, 349; Nainar, p. 129; Nadvi, p. 170.

[2] Mutahhar, IV, p. 15.

[3] C.V. Vaidya, *HMI*, II, p. 196.

[4] Who himself was quoting from Zurqan.

[5] Al-Biruni, I, p. 249.

[6] Ibid, I, p. 21. According to Idrisi, they were spread over the countries between Turan, Makran, Mansurah and Multan. They lived to the

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west of sind in the hilly country. Between Multan and Mansurah there were Gypsies who called themselves Budohas (Buddhists), *Hindustan*, II, p. 194.

1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 40.
2. Ibid, I, p. 158.
3. Shahrastani, III, p. 240.
4. Ibid.

tions with brothers and friends, to give preference to the likings and wishes of others over one's own, to devote to truth wholly after turning away from the created world, and the last thing is to annihilate oneself in search of Nirvan."[1] Shahrastani further tells us that the Buddha appeared in the world seven times, only in India, each time from a princely family. Buddhists believed in the eternity of the world (azliya) and in Karma (jaza, 'retribution'). Shahrastani concludes his chapter on Buddhism with the remark that in its feature Buddhism is closely connected with India, and that in Islam the nearest approach to Buddhism is Khizr.[2] Masudi writes, "Budasaf thought the renunciation of the world and turning attention to the world of higher reality because the man and his spirit has come from there and is destined to go there."[3] Masudi informs us specially of the spread of Buddhism in many countries. "Budasaf was born in India and was an Indian. He travelled from India to China and then to Sijistan and then he went to Zabulistan. From there he came back to sind and then going to Kirman proclaimed prophethood there. Then he came to Persia. He was the first man who proclaimed the religion of the Sabis."[4]

Abdul Qahir Bhaghdadi mentions the principle of transmigration of soul according to Buddhists : " The Samanias are believers in the doctrine of the transmigration of souls. They think that the knowledge and experience can be gained through sense only. The Buddhists believe that the souls are transferred to many shapes and bodies. They think it is possible that the soul of a dog may enter the body of a man."[5] Marvazi briefly writes, "They have many tales about Buddha and the Bodhisattvas (al budhisifiya) on which they meditate, most of them believe in metempsychosis."[6] Gardizi

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1. Shahrastani, III, p. 240.
2. Ibid; Cf. R.K. Chaube, *India as told by the Muslims*, pp. 133-135.
3. Masudi, IV, p. 45.
4. Ibid, Cf. R.K. Chaube, *op.cit.*, p. 135.
5. Abdul Qahir Baghdadi, *Al-Farq*, pp. 253-254; Cf. R.K. Chaube, *op. cit.*, p. 136.
6. Marvazi, p. 46 (43).

mentions Buddhists (Shamani) only in his introduction, saying that Shamani rejects the prophets.[1] Mutahhar concludes his chapter on India with the remark that 'I have read in the kitab al-Masalik that the Buddhists (al-Shamaniya) form two parties, that which affirms that Buddha is the Creator who has menifested himself in this form."[2] The same statement on the divisions of Buddhism together with additional information, is found in the Fihrist : "and here too their opinions differ. Some say that the apostle is an angel, some other say that he is a human being, some again say he is a demon (ifrit), some again say that he is the image (surat) of the sage Budasf, who came to them from God. And each section of them has a special way of worshipping and exalting him. According to some authority, each community of them worship, budd being a generic name of which the idols are species, and the highest budd (Buddha) is a man seated on a throne, beardless, with a receding chin, wearing no dress and faintly smiling."[3] He further says, "People pay respects to them facing east or west towards the idols. But most of the people face east so that the back of the idol is towards east. It is also mentioned that four faces of the idol are made with such skill and technic that towards any direction one may face, no part of the figure will remain hidden and the face of the idol will be fully visible."[4]

Al-Biruni on Idol Worship

To the Muslim writers Indians were idolaters. Most of the writers mentioned that Indians worshipped idols of many gods and goddesses in any form whatsoever. During the early medieval period idol worship was becoming more popular than any other form of worship, which led to the construction of numerous temples and the installation of idols representing gods and goddesses.

Among Muslim writers Al-Biruni deals with the subject of

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1. Gardizi, p. 630 (10 b).
2. Mutahhar, IV, p. 19; Cf. Huart, Ibid, p. 261.
3. Ibn Nadim, p. 347.
4. Ibid, p. 387; Cf. Nainar, pp 122-124.

idol worship in a reasoned manner. His chapter on idol worship begins with a philosophical explaination of how the vulgar mind was deeply affected by visible emblems in worship. Al-Biruni thinks that he can discover the origin of the practice of idolatry in the condition of human nature. He writes, "And as common people will only acquiesce in pictorial representations, many of the leaders of religious communities have so far deviated from the right path as to give such imagery in their books and houses of worship, like the jews and Christians, and more than all, the Manichaens."[1] He further observes that, "These words of mine would at once receive a sufficient illustration if, for exemple, a picture of the Prophet were made, or of Mekka and the Ka'ba were shown to an uneducated man or woman, their joy in looking at the thing would bring them to kiss the picture, to rub their cheeks against it, and to roll themselves in the dust before it, as if they were seeing not the picture, but the original, and were in this way, as if they were present in the holy places, performing the rites of pilgrimage, the great and the small ones."[2]

Regarding the origin of idol worship, he says that there were some theories which claimed that all mankind believed in idolatry before God sent Prophets to reveal His truth to men,[3] others thought that mankind began with true religion but later fell into the error of idolatry. According to Al-Biruni, the Hindus believed that idolatry was introduced by king Ambarish in consequence of certain appearances to him of the god Indra.[4] In this connection Ibn Nadim writes that the people or Hind had no unanimous opinion concerning their idols. According to one sect, the idol was the representation of the Creator, according to another, it was the representation of his messenger.[5]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 111.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid, p. 112.

[4] Ibid, pp. 112-113.

[5] Nainar (Ibn Nadim), p. 123.

Idols, says Ai-Biruni, were merely for the use of uneducated low-class people of little understanding, that the Hindus never made an idol of any supernatural being, much less of God; and, lastly, to show how the crowd is kept in thraldom by all kinds of priestly tricks and deceits.[1] He further quotes the Gīta to press the point that educated Hindus knew that normal representation could be made of God.[2] The Hindus honoured their idols on account of those who erected them, and not on account of the material of which they were made.[3]

Construction of Idols

Most of the idols of gods and goddesses were chiselled with care. All idols, as Al-Biruni remarks, were constructed according to certain measures, determined by idol-fingers for every single limb, but sometimes they differed regarding the measure of a limb. If the artist kept the right measure and did not make anything too large nor too small, he was free from sin and was sure that the deity which he represented will not do any harm.[4] It also appears that the idols were made generally of stone, but sometimes of silver, gold or precious stones as well. Regarding the comparative merit of such idols Al-Biruni observes, "If the statue is made of some precious stone, it is better than if it were made of wood and wood is better than clay." Quoting from same source he adds, "the benefits of a statue of precious stone will be common to all men and women of the empire. A golden statue will bring power to him who erected it, a statue of silver will bring him renown, one of bronze will bring him an increase of his rule, one of stone the acquisition of landed property."[5] Al-Biruni informs us that the image of the sun god of Multan was made of wood,[6] the eyes of which were

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1 Al-Biruni, I, p. 122.
2. Cf. Gita, IV, 25.
3. Al-Biruni, I, p. 121.
4. Ibid, p. 120.
5. Ibid, p. 121.
6. Ibid.

studded with red rubies. It was covered with cardovan leather.[1]

The Worshippers

As regards the worshippers of gods and goddesses, Al-Biruni makes the following observation, "To the idol of Visnu are devoted the class called Bhagavata; to the idol of the sun, the Maga, i.e. the Magians; to the idol of Mahadeva, a class of saints, anchorites with long hair, who cover their skin with ashes, hang on their persons the bones of dead people, and swim in the pools. The Brahmanas are devoted to the Eight Mothers, the Shamanians to Buddha, to Arhant the class called Nagna. On the whole, to each idol certain people are devoted who constructed it, for those know best how to serve it."[2]

Modes of Worship

Describing the various modes of worship in temples, Al-Biruni says that the idols of many gods and goddesses were worshipped. The worshippers killed sheep and buffaloes with axes (Kutara) so that they might nourish themselves with their blood.[3] This statement should apply only to the goddess Durgā or Cāmuṇḍā, not to all gods, and certainly not to those whose followers believed in Ahiṁsā.[4] However, this shows that animals were sacrificed in the temples of Śaktī (Devī). Such sacrifices were commonly practised in the temple of Kāmākhyā Devī in Assam.[5]

Some Hindu Idols

Al-Biruni mentions some of the more famous idols known to him. The idol of Multan, called Āditya, was dedicated to the sun. It was made of wood and covered with red cordovan leather. Its two eyes were formed of two rubies.[6] When

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1. See *Multan*.
2. Al-Biruni, I, p. 121.
3. Ibid, p. 120.
4. R.B. Singh, *History of the Chahmanas*, p. 389.
5. Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, II, pp. 288-290.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 116.

the karmatian sect usurped power and captured Multan, the idol was broken to pieces and insulted by hanging a piece of cow's flesh on its neck. The priests were put to death. Maqdissi and Qazwini and some othars have given an account of the idol of Multan.[1] Multan was a great centre of pilgrimage for the worshippers of the sun. The sun-god occupied a prominent place among the Hindu deities in Northern India in the early medieval period. Though sun worship is closely related to the Vedic religion, Sri R.G. Bhandarkar thinks that the sun worship of the early medieval period has nothing to do with the vedic solar deity and it was most probably a scythic importation into India.[2] But the accounts of Muslim writers clearly indicate that the sun was worshipped by the Hindu masses. There are references to a large number of sun images, which were worshipped by the devotees in the early medieval period. Ibn Nadim says that the idol of Multan was believed to have the power of curing a patient of any disease.[3] An inscription engraved on the back-side of the sun image (Dinajpur) describes the Sun as curer af all diseases and illuminator of the world.[4] The sun god was worshipped, as mentioned in the inscriptions, by such names as, Sūrya, Indrāditya, Lollārka, Bhāskara, Varuṇaswāmī and Mārtaṇḍa,[5] besides Āditya in Al-Biruni. There was a cult of sun worshippers. All this indicates the popularity of sun worship during this period.

At Thanesvara there was a life size bronze idol of Cakraswāmin, Lord of Cakra, which was highly venerated by the Hindus.[6] The idol was evidently an image of Viṣṇu.

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1. Maqdissi, *Ahsan at Taqasim*, p. 483, *Hindustan*, II, p. 294; Qazwini *Asrul Bilad*, p. 81; Elliot., I, p. 96.
2. R.G Bhandarkar, *Collected Works*, IV, p. 221, Cf. I.A. 1925, pp. 161, 171.
3. Ibn Nadim, p. 486.
4. *JASB* (N.S.), XXVI, p. 147, pl. 2; Cf. Hopkins, *Epic Mythology*, p. 168, A *Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology*, p. 30.
5. *EI*, XI, p. 55; XXI, p. 11; IX, pp. 1-5; XIX, p. 178; IV, p. 129, XVI, p. 13; CII, III (*Deo Barnak Ins.*), Raj. III, 467, IV, 192.
6. Al-Biruni, I, p. 117.

According to Hindu belief, Viṣṇu rides Garuḍa, holding in one hand, śaṁkha; in the second hand, cakra; in the third an amulet and in the fourth, padma.[1] Many images of Viṣṇu are known to have been made with these attributes.[2] The Viṣṇu cult was very popular during the early medieval period. The god was worshipped by different names, i.e. Murāri, Hari, Mādhava, Nārāyaṇa, Svāmī Cakraswāmī[3] etc. There were many Viṣṇu temples in India. The Thāneśvara temple of Viṣṇu was destroyed by Mahmud and its idol lay 'in the hippodrome in Ghazna together with the Lord of Somanath.'[4]

The idol of Somanātha represented the liṅga of Mahādeva.[5] Somanātha was one of the greatest Śaivite centres of India and was included among the twelve Jyotirliṅgas,[6] most venerated by the Hindus.

Al-Biruni says that the idol of Somanātha was most famous among the idols of Hindu deities. It was believed that the liṅga of Somanātha could cure persons of every inveterate illness and heal any incurable disease.[7] Śiva was a very popular Indian god, in whose honour numerous temples were constructed and a huge amount of wealth was offered and deposited in the temples. When Mahmud attacked Somanātha in 1026 A.D. the idol was dug out from its foundation and broken into small pieces. Some of these were taken to Ghazna on camels where they were put under the steps of the mosque. A huge amount of treasure in forms of silver, idols, jewels, etc. fell into the hands of the Muslims.[8]

The day of full moon in the month of Śrāvaṇa was a fast day holy to Somanātha.[9] Lakhs of pilgrims went there to have a bath at the time of every eclipse day.[1] It was flow and ebb to which Somanātha owed its name, for the stone (or liṅga) of Somanātha was originally erected on the coast, a little less than three miles west of the mouth of the river Saraswatī, east of the golden fortress Baroi (which had appeared as a dwelling place for Vāsudeva not far from the place where he and his family were killed, and where they were burned), which was perpetually bathed by the daily phases of tides caused by the rising and setting of the moon. Therefore, the idol owed its name to the flow and ebb of the moon.[2]

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, p. 114.

[2] V. Upadhyay, *Socio-Religious Condition of Northern India*, p. 214.

[3] V. Upadhyay, *op.cit.*, pp. 211-212.

[4] Al-Biruni, I, p. 117.

[5] Ibid.

[6] *Śivapurāṇa*, Ch. I, 14-33; IV, 1-18; 21-24.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 104; Cf. Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 211.

[8] Gardizi (Sharma), p. 30.

[9] Al-Biruni, II, p. 176.

Śiva was worshipped in phallic as well as in human form Both these forms are referred to in the Bṛhatsaṁhitā and the Samarāṅgaṇasūtradhāra. We have a large number of Śiva icons in phallic and human forms. In human form Śiva was generally sculptured in the forms known as, Hara-Gaurī, Umā-Maheśvara or Śiva-Pārvatī, Ardhanārīśvara and Naṭarāja. Connected with the Śaiva sects were the images of Lakulīśa, the founder of the Pāśupata system, which were also worshipped. However, the most popular form of Śaiva worship was phallic or liṅga worship. The twelve Jyotirliṅga connected with the Śaiva centres of worship were highly venerated by the people during the early medieval period.

In inner Kashmir, about two or three days' journey from the capital in the direction towards the mountains of Bolor, there was a wooden idol called Śāradā which was held in great veneration and was visited by pilgrims.[3] The idols were made according to strict technical rules, some of which have been quoted by Al-Biruni from Varāhamihira.[4]

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1. Elliot, II, (Aligarh Ed.), p. 474.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 105.
3. Ibid, I, p. 117.
4 Ibid, p 117 ff.; Cf. *Bṛhatsaṁhitā*, Chapters LVIII, IX.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS RITES, FASTS AND FESTIVALS

The religious condition of the times has been discussed in the previous chapter mainly from the secterian point of view or from the point of view of various religious groups. The present chapter is devoted to a picture of the religion as commonly practised by the large majority of the Hindu population, and discusses such things as domestic rites, pilgrimages, fasts, fastivals, etc.

Samskaras

The Saṁskāras are of great importance in the life of a Hindu. A saṁskāra is a socio-religious rite by the performance of which the life of the Hindu is sanctified.[1] The importance of the saṁskāras was recognised very early in ancient India. Even the legal competence of a Hindu could be affected by "the commission and omission of particular religious duties and by their performance at proper and improper moments."[2] The Gṛhyasūtras generally begin with vivāh, and go on to describe garbhādhāna, the puṁsavana, the sīmantonayana, the jātakarma, the nāmakaraṇa, the niṣkramaṇa, the annaprāśana, the cūḍākarma, the upanayana, and the samāvartana. Then they describe the sacrifices and rites to be performed by a married couple, and in the end deal with the antyeṣṭi or funeral ceremonies. As some Gṛhyasūtras regard the funeral ceremonies as inauspicious, they include them in separate pariśiṣṭas or addenda.[3] Vedavyāsa enumerates sixteen saṁskāras from garbhādhāna to antyeṣṭi.[4] Al-Biruni describes some of these saṁskāras in accordance with the provisions of the Gṛhyasūtras and other works. We have already discussed the marriage and funeral ceremonies in detail.[1] In the description of Al-Biruni we get only few saṁskāras of embryo and childhood.

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[1] K. Deshpande (Mrs.), *The Child in Ancient India*, p. 6.

[2] Rangaswami, *Rājadharma*, p 10.

[3] R.B. Pandey, *Hindu Saṁskāras*, p. 11.

[4] *Vedavyāsa*, I, 14-15.

Garbhadhana

After describing the marriage ceremony Al-Biruni mentions the garbhādhāna saṁskāra, i.e., the rite through which a man placed his seed in a woman. He writes, "It is the duty (of the Brāhmaṇa), if he wants to cohabit with a wife to get a child, to perform a sacrifice to the fire called garbhādhāna, but he does not perform it, because it requires the presence of the woman, and therefore he feels ashamed to do so."[2] This saṁskāra has been named variously as Niṣeka, Caturthīkarma or homa, by some authorities.[3] Commenting on this saṁskāra, Dr. R.B. Pandey remarks that this rite was not a religious fiction "but a ceremony corresponding to fact, though its adherents, later on, fought shy of, and ultimately, abandoned it."[4]

Simantonayana

Al-Biruni mentions it after garbhādhāna, though generally this was the third saṁskāra of embryo. The Āpastamba Gṛhyasūtra and Bhārdvāja Gṛhyasūtra describe before the puṁsavana, the second saṁskāra of embryo.[5] The rite was called sīmantonayana, in which the hairs of a pregnant woman were parted.[6] Referring to this, Al-Biruni says, "In consequence he postpones the sacrifice (garbhādhāna) and unites it with the next following one, which is due in the fourth month of the pregnancy, called sīmantonayanam."[7] Al-Biruni gives the time of its performance in the fourth month of the pregnancy. The Gṛhyasūtras generally favour the fourth, sixth, eighth.[1] The purpose of the saṁskāra was, in the opinion of Dr. Pandey, partly superstitious and partly practical.[2] According to P.V. Kane this saṁskāra was mainly of a social and festival nature intended to keep the pregnant woman in good cheer.[3] It was performed to ward off evil spirits from the pregnant woman,[4] for which parting and dressing of the hair by the husband were recommended.[5]

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[1] See Chapters on Marriage, Laws and Customs, and Popular Beliefs, Superstitions and Practices.

[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.

[3] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 195-96.

[4] R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, p. 79.

[5] *Ap Gr.S.*, XIV. 1-8, *Bhār. Gr.S.*, I. 21-26, *Baudh.*, I. 10, *Yāj.* I. 11.

[6] *VMSP*, II, p. 172; *SC.*, I, p. 17.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.

Jatakarman (Birth ceremonies)

In P.V. Kane's view this saṁskāra appears to have been a rite of 'hoary antiqutiy'.[6] Regarding this rite, Al-Biruni says, "After the wife has given birth to the child, a third sacrifice is performed between the birth and the moment when the mother begins to nourish the child. It is called jātakarman."[7] Different sūtras have expressed different opinions about the time. Āśvalāyana says that the rite should be performed before a person other than the mother and the nurse touches the child.[8] Parāśara, Gobhila and Khādira are of opinion that it should be performed before the navel string is cut off and breasts are given to the child.[9] In conclusion, we may say that the time given by Al-Biruni is correct. The Gṛhyasūtras give a detailed procedure of this rite, but Al-Biruni omits the details.

Namakarana

The importance of name-giving has been recognised by Indians since very early times. The procedure of name-giving was converted into a religious ceremony. Bṛhaspati remarks that 'name brings about merits and it is the root of fortune.'[1] Al-Biruni says, "The child receives a name after the days of the child-bed have elapsed. The sacrifice for the occasion of of the name-giving is called nāmakarman."[2] He, however, does not give any definite time for this saṁskāra. Most of the Gṛhyasūtras are of the opinion that the nāmakaraṇa ceremony should be performed on the tenth or the twelfth day after the birth of the child,[3] with the exception of the secret name which was given, in the opinion of some on the birthday.[4] The Gobhila Gṛhyasūtra prescribes that the ceremony should be performed on the tenth, twelfth, hundredth day or at the expiry of the first year.[5] Bṛhaspati lays down that a name should be given to the child on the tenth, twelfth, sixteenth, nineteenth or thirty-second day after the birth of the child.[6] The astrological works recommend that these dates can be postponed if there is any natural 'abnormality or lack of religious propriety.'[7]

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[1] *Āśv. Gṛ.S.*, I, 14, 1-2, *Hir. Gṛ.S.*, II, 1, 1-2; *Bhār. Gṛ.S.*, I, 21; 21, 7; Āp, *Gṛ.S.*, VI, 14, 1, *Baudh. Gṛ.S.*, I, 10, 1, *Jaim. Gṛ.S.*, I, 7, 6, 20; *Gobh. Gṛ.S.*, II, 7, 1-2; *Pār. Gṛ.S.*, I, 15, 3,

[2] Pandy, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

[3] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 223.

[4] *Āśvalāyanācārya*, quoted in *VMSP*, I, p. 172.

[5] *Baudh. Gṛ.S.*, I. 10, 7.

[6] Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 228.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.

[8] *Āśv. Gṛ S.*, I. 15.2.

[9] *Parāśara Gṛ. S.*, I, 16; *Gobhila. Gṛ. S.*, II. 7, 17, *Khādira*, II, 2, 32.

Cudakarana or Caula and Karnavedha

Regarding these two saṁskāras, Al-Biruni says, "the longest duration of the suckling of the child is three years, but there is no obligation in this matter. The sacrifice on the occasion of the first cutting of the child-hair is offered in the third, the perforation of the ears takes place in the seventh and eighth years."[8] The first ceremony, Al-Biruni says, was performed in the third year from the birth. This is in agreement with the views of several writers.[9] According to Baudhāyana, Pāraskara, Manu, and Vaikhānasa it may be performed in the first or third year.[10] Prescribing the third year for its performance, Āśvalāyana suggests that it may be performed in

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1. *Bṛhaspati* quoted in *VMSP*, I, p. 241.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 156.
3. *Baudh. Gṛ.S.*, II, 1, 23; *Cf. Manu.*, II, 30.
4. R.B. Pandey, *op. cit.*, p. 142.
5. *Gobh. Gṛ.S.*, II. 8. 8; *Khād. Gr.S.* II, 3.6.
6. *Brhaspati* quoted in *VMSP*, I, p. 234.
7. R.B. Pandey, *op. cit*, p. 142.
8. Al-Biruni, II, p. 157.
9. Kane *HDS*, II, fn. 597, p. 260.
10. *Baudh. Gr.S.* II. 4; *Pār. Gr. S.*, II. 1; *Manu.*, II. 35; *Vaikh.*, III. 23.

the year in which it is the custom of the family to perform it.[1] Yama allows it in the first, second or third year.[2]

Al-Biruni gives the time of Karṇavedha in the seventh or eighth year, which seems incorrect. Possibly he was misinformed or had read seventh or eighth years for the corresponding months. We are told by writers that it may be performed in the seventh or eighth month.[3] According to Bṛhaspati it may be performed on the 10th, 12th or 16th day from birth or in the 7th or 10th month from birth.[4] Garga regards the 6th, the 7th or 12th month as suitable time.[5] In the opinion of Śrīpati, the Karṇavedha ceremony should be performed before the teeth of the child come out and while it is still creeping on the lap of the mother.[6] According to the Kātyāyana Sūtra, the proper time of its performance may be the third or fifth year of the child.[7] Suśruta prefers the sixth or seventh month.[8] "The idea underlying the early age was that the boring would be easier and less troublesome to the child."[9] The last rite distinguished the Hindu from the Muslim in particular.[10]

Besides these, there were other Hindu saṁskāras. Al-Biruni mentions one more rite in connection with the educational saṁskāra. This was called Yajñopavīta, which was performed at the time when the boy had to be initiated to the vedic studies.[11] It was later followed by Samāvartana, which took place at the end of vedic studies and the boy was allowed by the teacher to enter into Gṛhasthāśrama after marrying a girl of his own Varṇa,[12] The marriage saṁskāra was the most important among all the Hindu saṁskāras.[1] Finally Al-Biruni mentions antyeṣṭi rites under the heading customs of the Hindus, with which the last chapter of a Hindus' life closed [2]

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[1] *Aśv. Gṛ.S.*, I. 17, 1-18.
[2] *Yama* quoted by *Aparārka*, p. 20.
[3] *Baudh. Gṛ.S.*, I. 12.
[4] *Bṛhaspati* quoted in *VMSP*, I, p. 258.
[5] R.B. Pandey, *op.cit.*, p. 173.
[6] *Śrīpati* quoted in *VMSP*, I, p. 261
[7] R.B. Pandey *op. cit*, p. 174.
[8] *Suśruta Sūtrasthān, Ch.* 16. 1.
[9] R.B. Pandey, *op cit.*, p. 174.
[10] C.V. Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 400.
[11] Al-Biruni, II, p. 130.
[12] Ibid, p. 131.

Pilgrimages (Tirthas)

From verly eary times the Hindus believed in the sacredness of certain holy places. Their spiritual importance mentioned in the religious works attracted people from distant parts of India. To earn spiritual merit religious rites were performed and gifts were made at these places. A visit to these places in itself was considered meritorious and regarded as a means of attaining salvation. A long list of name of such places occurs in the Purāṇas.[3] These have been mentioned by Lakṣmīdhara in his digest on the subject[4] and Dānasāgara (1164 A.D.) of Vallālasena.[5] Early Muslim writers have made occasional mention of some of the holy places, which were visited by the Hindus during the early medieaval period. Al-Biruni devotes a full chapter to this aspect of religious life.[6] He writes, "Pilgrimages are not obligatory to the Hindus, but facultative and meritorius. A man sets off to wander to some holy region, to some much venerated idol or to some of the holy rivers. He worships in them, worships the idol, makes presents to it, recites many hymns and prayers, fasts, and gives alms to the Brāhmaṇas, the priests and

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1. See Chapter on Marriage, Law and Customs.
2. See Chapter on Popular Beliefs, Superstition and Practices.
3. *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 22. 102-11, 122; *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I. 30-38; II. 35-37, 40-42; *Vāyu Purāṇa*, Ch. 126, 137-39; *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch 109-16; *Agni Purāṇa* also furnishes a valuable list of the Hindu *tīrthas* extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin, from *Dwārakā* to *Kāmrūpa*.
4. *Lakṣmīdhara* provides the details of the following *Tīrthas* : *Vārāṇasī*, *Prayāga*, *Gayā*, *Kurukṣetra*, *Pṛthūdaka*, *Mathurā*, *Ujjainī*, *Narmadā*, *Kuvyayuka*, *Śūkara*, *Kokāmukha*, *Badrikā*, *Mandāra*, *Śālagrāma*, *Stutaswāmī*, *Dwārakā*, *Lohāragala*, *Kedāra*, *Naimiṣa*, *Navatīrtha* and *Mahātīrtha*. (*KKT*, *Tīrtha Kāṇḍa*).
5. *Dānasāgara* mentions the sanctity of 27 rivers and of as many as 95 *tīrthas* where making gifts and performing *śrāddha* were specially meritorious. *Dānasāgra*, edited by B. Bhattacharyya, *B.I.* No. 274, 1953-55, pp. 35-40.
6. Al-Biruni, II, Ch. LXVI.

others. He shaves the hair of his head and beard and returns home."[1]

The works, which deal with the tīrthas, recommend that all the necessary rituals must be performed by the pilgrims. Pilgrimages were prescribed for all the four āśramas and the four varṇas. Snāna, japa, homa, śrāddha and dāna are said to liberate seven generations of a man. For purification a man was also required to observe a fast. There was a special merit in having a shave at tīrthas like Prayāga and in giving up one's own body at Vārāṇasī. The shaving at tīrthas is said to destroy all sins. Liberal distribution of gifts at tīrthas was considered meritorious. The Tiwarkhed plates inform us that Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Nannarāja, on the occasion of a solar eclipse, visited Kapil Tīrtha and made gifts of lands.[2] According to the Agni Purāṇa pilgrims at a tīrtha were required to follow strictly the rules of fasting and shaving of heads.[3] The Charakhari plate, dated V.S. 1108/1051 A.D. says that the Candella king Devavarmanadeva had a bath at Koṭitīrtha on a full moon day and worshipped Śiva and donated a village to a Brāhmaṇa.[4]

Varanasi

Al-Biruni gives the names of places first from the Vāyu and Matsya Purāṇas. Then he mentions the four ponds in which the people took bath. The ponds were at Multan, Thāneśvara, Mathurā and in Kashmir. Vārāṇasī had, however, an importance of its own as a holy place. "The Hindus have some places which are venerated for reasons connected with their law and religion, e.g. Benares (Varanasi). For their anchorites wander to it and stay there for ever, as the dwellers of the Kalba stay for ever in Mekka. They want to live there to the end of their lives, that their reward after death should be the better for it. They say that a murderer is held responsible for his crime

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 142.
2. *EI*, XI, p. 279.
3. *Agni Purāṇa, Ch.* 115, v. 7.
4. *EI*, XX, p. 127.

and punished with a punishment due to his guilt, except in case he enters the city of Benares where he obtains pardon."[1] Indeed the importance of Vārāṇasī had been recognised since early times. It is the capital where Lord Śiva resides. It is here that the river Gaṅgā runs slightly north, which makes the place specially sacred. According to Lakṣmīdhara, Vārāṇasī, the abode of Śiva, is a tīrtha par excellence. He mentions various sacred places of Vārāṇasī,[2] which have been mentioned in other works[3] as well as in the Gāhaḍavāla inscriptions.[4] Some of the holiest tīrthas were connected with Gaṅgā, which added to their importance. Vārāṇasī including Gaṅgādvāra (Hardwār) Prayāga and Gaṅgāsāgara,[5] were the highly sacred places. At these places a bath in the Gaṅgā was considered very meritorious. Marvazi and Gardizi mention a sect of the people (probably they meant people who took pilgrimage to the Gaṅgā), called the K.Nkabatriya (Gaṅgā Yātriya), who were scattered all over India. One of their customs was that whenever a man had committed a sin or disobeyed one of his parents or done anything wicked, he travelled from his place to the Gaṅgā and washed himself in its water and purified himself from his sin. And if he died on the way to the Gaṅgā, his repentance was accepted.[6] The holiness of the Gaṅgā was wellknown. According to Utbi, the ashes of the dead were thrown into it. It was believed that "it cleanses them from all sins." He adds that "very often pious men came from far and away and threw themselves into its water in the belief that such a death would lead to their salvation."[7] At Prayāga, on the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā, people committed religious suicide for salvation.[8] According

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1. Ai-Biruni, II, pp. 146-147.
2. *Tīrtha.* (*KKT*), pp. 231-245.
3. *Agni Purāṇa. Ch.* 112, vv. 3-5; *Matsya Purāṇa,* Ch. 184, vv. 66-67.
4. *EI*, IV, p. 112, VIII, p. 154.
5. *Agni Purāṇa,* Ch 111, vv. 11.12.
6. Marvazi, p. 43; Gardizi, p. 634.
7. Utbi, (Tr. Sharma), p. 61.
8. *See* pp. 207-212.

to Al-Qazwini, the idol of Somanātha was washed daily with the water of the Gaṅgā.[1] Ibn Battuta also confirms that the Hindus made pilgrimage to it, the ashes of the dead were cast into it and many drowned themselves for committing suicide.[2]

Prayaga

Though Prayāga has not been included among the tīrthas by the Muslim writers, it was known to them as a centre of religious activities. Al-Biruni informs us that people committed suicide at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Yamunā.[3] Gardizi also says that a sect of people used to commit suicide at the confluence.[4] The practice of committing suicide here is also described by Hsuan Tsang.[5] The Purāṇas recommend religious suicide at Prayāga for salvation.[6] It is said that Cedi king Gāṅgeyadeva came to Prayāga for this very purpose.[7] The sanctity of Prayāga is described in the religious literature of the period.[8] Prayāga has been eulogised as tīrtharāja (king of tīrthas) and as the abode of all other tīrthas.[9] Lakṣmīdhara assigns to it the second important place among the tīrthas. To glorify its sanctity he quotes the Matsya Purāṇa.[10] Undoubtedly as a religious place and as a tīrtha Prayāga had been important from times immemorial. 'Those who bathe at the confluence of the white and black rivers—the Gaṅgā and Yamunā—go to heaven; those of firm mind who give up their bodies here, attain immortality.'[11]

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[1] Elliot, I, p. 98; Cf. Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, pp. 209-214.

[2] Ibn Battuta, pp. 152, 184, 193, 267.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 170-171.

[4] Gardizi, p, 639.

[5] Watters, I, pp. 364-365.

[6] *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 106; *Kūrma Purāṇa*, I, 38.

[7] *EI*, II, p. 4 (v. 12).

[8] Kane, *HDS*, IV, pp. 596, 600, 697.

[9] *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 108, vv. 15-16; Ch. 109, vv. 1-3.

[10] Tīrtha (*KKT*), p. 136-153.

[11] *Ṛgveda, Khila (Āśvalāyana)*.

Mathura

Mathurā was a celebrated centre of pilgrimage. Al-Biruni informs us that Mathurā (Mahura) was regarded as a holy place, crowded with Brāhmaṇas. It was venerated because Vāsudeva was born there and brought up in a place in the neighbourhood called Nandagola.[1] According to the Varāha Purāṇa any one bathing in the Yamunā is purified of all sins. It is believed that a sin committed elsewhere is destroyed in a tīrtha but a sin committed in a tīrtha sticks hard. This is true of other tīrthas, but in Mathurā, the sin committed there is destroyed in Mathurā itself.[2] The Gaṅgā purifies one by a bath, the Yamunā by the drinking of her sweet water. Lakṣmīdhara describes the importance and sacredness of Mathurā in detail, which shows that during the early medieaval period Mathurā was an important tīrtha of India.[3] There are many other sites connected with the life activities of Kṛṣṇa[4] and all are holy places.[5] There were thousands of temples in the eleventh century, writes Utbi. Mathurā being the place of pilgrimage, people believed that it was the abode of spirits, and not of men.[6] According to Gardizi, it was a great and sacred city of the Hindus, as it was the birth-place of Kṛṣṇa, son of Vāsudeva. In this city there was a great Hindu temple. When Mahmud attacked Mathurā, vast treasures and property of the temples beyond counting fell into his hands.[7]

Kashmir

Being a centre of education and culture, Kashmir attracted people.[8] According to Al-Biruni, the Hindus visited Kashmir regularly.[9] At another place he writes, "In Inner Kashmir, about two or three days' journey from the capital in the direction towards the mountains of Bolor, there is a wooden idol called Śāradā, which is much venerated and frequented by pilgrims."[1] Obviously Al-Biruni speaks of Śārada tīrtha, which has been mentioned in the Matsya Purāṇa alongwith other famous tīrthas of Kashmir.[2] Kalhaṇa also refers to it as a sacred spot of pilgrimage.[3] The temple of Śāradā was dedicated to goddess Durgā, which Abul Fazl writes, "begins to shake on the eighth day of the bright half of every month and produces the most extraordinary effect."[4] Al-Biruni also refers to Pāpasūdan, where Śiva is worshipped under the name Kabatesvara. According to him, the people of Kashmir say that pieces of wood sent by Mahadeva appear annually in a "pond called Kudaishahr (?), to the left of the source of Vitasta in the middle of the month of Vaiśākha."[5] Stein identifies it with Kapāṭeśvara[6] which was, according to the Rājataraṅgiṇī, a tank constructed by king Bhoja of Malawa.[7] Abul Fazl also mentions it as a famous tīrtha.[8]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 147-148.
[2] *Varāha Purāṇa, Ch.* 152, Cf. *Padma Purāṇa*, 21, 46.
[3] *Tīrtha* (*KKT*), pp. 175-176.
[4] Ibid, p. 190.
[5] *Jinaprabhā Sūri, Vividha Tīrtha Kalpa*, p. 19.
[6] Utbi (Tr. Sharma), pp. 59-60; Elliot, II, pp. 44-45.
[7] Gardizi (Tr. Sharma), p. 26.
[8] *Hudud*, p. 92.
[9] Al-Biruni, II, p. 118.

Somanatha

Among the Śaivite tīrthas Somanātha earned great fame and was frequently visited by people from all parts of India. The Temple of Somanātha has been described by several Muslim writers. Al-Biruni says that, in the south-west of the Sindh country, Śiva-lingas were worshipped in every Hindu house, though the idol of Somanātha was the most venerated one. "Every day they brought there a jug of Ganges water and a basket of flowers from Kashmir. They believed that the linga of Somanāth would cure persons of every inveterate illness and heal every desperate and incurable

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1. Al-Biruni, I, p. 117.
2. *Matsya Purāṇa*, 22. 74.
3. *Rāj*., VIII, 2556, 1706.
4. *Ain-i-Akbari* (Tr. Jarret), II, p. 366.
5. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 181-182.
6. Stein in *Rāj*, II, p. 288.
7. *Rāj*., VII. 190-193.
8. *Ain-i-Akbari, op. cit.*, p. 358.

disease."[1] From Yaqut we learn that Somanātha was the biggest temple in the whole of Hind. It was to the Hindus that Mecca was to the Muslims.[2] Qazwini records that the people of Hind used to go on pilgrimage to Somanātha whenever there was an eclipse of the moon, and then assembled there in large numbers exceeding a hundred thousand.[3] According to Gardizi the Hindus respected Somanātha in the same manner in which the Muslims respected Mecca.[4] As stated by Muslim writers, the Hindus believed that the idol of Somanātha possessed divine powers. "That it gave life and death that after death spirits assembled before it and were reallotted to different bodies, that it apportioned to human beings pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, and that it could cure all forms of disease. The idol reckoned among its devotees numerous rājās who either came personally or sent their deputies to attend to its worship on their behalf."[5] On every eclipse day lacs of pilgrims gathered there.[6] One thousand Brāhmaṇas were engaged in the daily worship. Three hundred barbers used to shave the pilgrims. About 350 dancing girls were engaged for dancing and music.[7] A huge amount was spent on its maintenance, for which purpose the revenues of 10,000 villages were endowed to the temple. Richest presents were offered to the idol by the kings of India. At the request of his mother king Jayasimha Siddharāja abolished the tax on pilgrims who visited Somanātha.[8] It is said that Pṛthvīrāja I got an alms-house (Anna-Satra) built on the road from Sombhar to Somanātha to facilitate the journey of pilgrims from the kingdom of Ajmer.[9] Somanātha was indeed one of the greatest tīrthas of India. The Śiva

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 104.
[2] Nainar, p. 115.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Gardizi (Tr. Sharma), p. 30.
[5] Nazim, *Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, p. 211.
[6] Elliot, II, (Aligarh ed.), p. 474.
[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 157.
[8] *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (Tr. Tawney), p. 84; IA, XXXI; p. 483.
[9] *Visaladeva Rāso*, II, 10 and 15; *EI*, XIII, p 290.

Purāṇa mentions Somanātha (identical with Prabhāsa) among the twelve Jyotirlingas.[1] According to Kālaviveka of Jīmūtavāhana, a dip at Prabhāsa on amāvasyā or new moon day purifies a person of all sins.[2] The seventh khaṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa is known as the Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa. In the first 365 Adhyāyas it describes in details the origin, sanctity and religious importance of Prabhās tīrtha. The seventh chapter of Prbhāsa Khaṇḍa gives the legendary origin of this tīrtha. Al-Biruni describes the legend, which says that Somanātha is connected with Soma or the Moon who established here the first shrine of Lord Śiva.[3] The moon committed a sin in expiation of which he was required to raise the liṅga of Mahādeva as an object of worship. He did so, and the liṅga was called Somanātha, "for Soma means the moon and nātha means master, so that the whole word means master of the moon."[4] The shrine was plundered by Mahmud in 1025 A.D.[5] But it was immediately reconstructed by Bhīma and widely extended by Kumārapāla.[6]

Multan

"Multan was originally called Kasyapur, then Hamsapura, then Bagapura, then Sambhapura and then Mulasthana, i.e. the original place."[7] Detailed information about Multan is available in the writings of Muslim writers, most of whom unanimously describe its religious importance. It was undoubtedly one of the great centres of pilgrimage. Its idol of the Sun was the chief attraction for pilgrims, who used to visit it from long distances. The sun idol was greatly venerated by the Hindus. Whenever the Hindu kings went there with the

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1. *Śiva Purāṇa*, Ch. I. 14-31; IV. 1-18, 21-24.
2. *Kālaviveka*, p. 323.
3. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 102-103.
4. Ibid, Cf, *Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa*, Ch. 23.
5. Al-Biruni, II, p. 103.
6. *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, IV; Cf. Nazim, *op. cit.*, pp. 209-224. Between A.D. 1300 and 1700, the temple was destroyed several times, but each time it was soon restored.
7. Al-Biruni, I. p 298.

intention of invading it, they had to withdraw their armies from Multan because the Muslims threatened to break and burn it. This naturally made them turn back.[1] According to Masudi, the Hindus made pilgrimage to that city by the thousand from most distant places. They brought money, precious stones, aloes and many sorts of perfumes in fulfilment of their vows.[2] Abu Zayd writes that the people came from distant places, and the journey took them several months.[3] According to Abul Faraj (Nadim) travelling by land and sea the people of Hind from distant parts went on pilgrimage to the temple of Multan.[4] The author of the Hudud al-Alam writes that the place was important and the people came to this place on pilgrimage.[5] Ibn Hauqal remarks that the pilgrims came from distant regions and all parts of the country. Every year large quantities of wealth were offered to this idol.[6] Idrisi also states that the idol of Multan was highly venerated by the people of India, who travelled from the remotest parts of their country to perform a pilgrimage to it. They offered "abundant riches to it, and large quantities of ornaments, perfumes and other things beyond description, in order to exalt and glorify it."[7] According to Ibn Nadim, it was believed that if a patient, suffering from whatever disease, looked at it, God would cure him.[8] Biladhuri writes that the temple of Multan received rich presents and offerings and the people of sind went there on pilgrimage. He adds that they used to go round the temple and shave their heads and beards.[9] Shahrastani notes that the temple of Multan had a very big and strange idol and the Hindus visited it at a particular time.[10] Al-Biruni informs us that in Multan there was a pond in which the Hindus worshipped by bathing themselves, if they were not prevented. In the end he says that they used to visit Multan before the idol temple was destroyed.[1] Maqdisi states that it was believed that the idol (idols) of Multan could fulfil all the wishes of the people.[2] A later writer Qazvini also informs us that the unbelievers had a large temple with a great idol at Multan. It was for the Hindus as Mecca was for the Muslims. It was held in high esteem by the Hindus and was for them a place of worship and pilgrimage.[3] Ibn Rusta has given much more detailed information about the sun temple of Multan than any other writer. According to him, there was an idol in Multan which, according to Indian belief, had descended from the heaven and the God was represented in it. Indians used to come on pilgrimage even from places situated at a distance of one year's journey or more. They shaved their heads clean and circumambulated "seven times moving towards the left in order to gain its favour and to express their submissiveness to it." They rolled on the ground before it in complete submissiveness. Sometimes a person carried two pieces of red sandalwood on his shoulder, carrying each from a distance of one year's journey. Starting from the point of his departure, he placed one of those at a distance of about one farsakh (approximately three miles) from it. Then he carried the other one and placing it (ahead of the former) returned to the former, which he again lifted and carried forward. Thus he repeated the performance of carrying one forward and leaving the other behind, upto a distance of one year's journey until he reached this idol in Multan with both (of them). Sometimes the worshippers solicited the idol's permission saying "Allow me to die", and then took a long rod of wood and sharpened its head. Then fixing it in the ground, ascended up to its top and passed the sharp end of the rod into his stomach till it came out at the back when he died pretending he had achieved the favour of the idol. Some of them arrived with the heaps of wealth and offered it to the idol.[1] If a well-to-do person died, he bequethed to the idol a part or even the whole of his property to gain the god's favour. None of the writers except Al-Biruni mentions the identity of the idol. Undoubtedly it was the temple of Sun God—Āditya, which was worshipped by the Hindus with great veneration.[2] Biladhuri and the author of the Chachnama testify to the above facts.[3]

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[1] Istakhri, p. 10 (Text), p. 175.

[2] Masudi (Elliot, I), p. 23.

[3] Abu Zayd (Sup.), pp. 88-89.

[4] Nainar, p. 115.

[5] *Hudud*, p. 89, *PIHC*, 1939, p. 667.

[6] Ibn Hauqal. (*Text*), p. 32 (Tr.) p. 20.

[7] Idrisi, p. 49.

[8] Ibn Nadim, p. 486.

[9] Biladhuri (*Hindustan*), I, p. 97; Elliot, I, p. 123.

[10] Shahrastani, III, p. 319.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 145, 148; Cf. Elliot, I, pp, 123 and 206.

[2] Maqdisi (*Hindustan*), I, p. 294.

[3] Qazvini (Elliot, I), p. 96.

The Sacred Ponds

Besides the famous tīrthas there were a large number of sacred ponds of great importance. People used to go on pilgrimage to these sacred places, which were associated with some mythological events. While mentioning them, Al-Biruni remarks, "In every place to which some particular holiness is ascribed, the Hindus construct ponds intended for the ablutions. In this they have attained to a very high degree of art, so that our people (the muslims), when they see them, wonder at them, and are unable to describe them much less to construct anything like them."[4] He mentions two great sacred ponds of Puṣkara (Pukara) and Kurukṣetra. About Puṣkara he writes, "Brahman once was occupied in offering there to the fire, when a pig came out of the fire. Therefore they represent his image there as that of a pig. Outside the town, in three places, they have constructed ponds which stand in high veneration and are places of worship."[5] It is believed that Brahma accompanied by all gods resides there.[6] The antiquity of Puṣkara (near Ajmer) as a sacred place is recorded in the Mahābhārata. "Only the fortunate can visit Puṣkara—the best and the most universally known tīrtha among all tīrthas. Ten thousand crores of them abide here permanently.'"[1] It is said, "every thing was pure in the Kṛta age, in Tretā Puṣkara became sacred, in Dwāpara Kurukṣetra, and in the Kali age the Gaṅgā became sacred."[2] The Padma Purāṇa describes in detail the association of Brahma with Puṣkara.[3] It is famous as a tīrtha for Brahmā. On the full moon day of Kārtika Brahmā is worshipped and a great fair is held here. The Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra says, "A Śrāddha performed at Puṣkara yields inexhaustible merit. So too do the Japa, Homa and Tapas. A mere bath here purifies one from all sins."[4] In Puṣkara there are temples of Brahmā, Badrīnārāyaṇa, Varāhaji, Ātmeśvara Mahādeva and Sāvitrī. The temples of Brahmā and Varāhaji have a long and old tradition behind them. One visit to Puṣkara in the month of Kārtika secures the abode of Brahmā. It is said that only a single bath at Puṣkara is enough to destroy all the sins committed from birth onwards. "Just as Kṛṣṇa deserved the first place of honour among men and gods, so is Puṣkara said to be the first among all the tīrthas." A large number of people came to Puṣkara from all parts of the country to worship Brahmā, one of the three gods of the Hindu Trinity. Śiva was also worshipped. We are told that king Vākpatirāja I and his son Simhrāja built magnificent mansion of Śiva at Puṣkara.[5]

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[1] Ibn Rusta (*Text*), p. 136 (*Tr.*) pp. 54-55.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 116, *Cf.* Watters, II, p, 254.

[3] Elliot, I, p. 123 and pp. 205-206.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 144.

[5] Ibid, 147.

[6] *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch. 109, vv. 55-56.

The other sacred pond was at Kurukṣetra (the land of the Kurus). It was visited because of its being "the theatre of the exploits of Vasudeva in the wars of Bharata and the destruction of evil-doers."[6] It is for this reason, as Al-Biruni points out, that people visited this place, which was also called Taneshar. The idol of that place was called Cakrasvamin, which was believed to have been made in the time of Bharata as a memorial to the wars connected with this name.[1] Naturally Hindus came from far away places to bathe in its holy pond, particularly at the time of an eclipse. There are references to the kings going on pilgrimage[2] to tīrthas like Kurukṣetra.[3] Kurukṣetra is also known as Dharmakṣetra, the land of piety. In the Vanaparva of the Mahābhārata it is described as a very holy place. It is also called as Sanmhati, "because all tīrthas gather together here every month on the Amāvasyā day." On the day of Solar eclipse any one who bathes, performs Śrāddha and gives dāna, receives benefit equal to having performed 100 Aśvamedha sacrifices. The Mahābhārata says, even one who expresses an intention saying "I shall go and abide at Kurukṣetra, becomes free from sin, should the dust of this place, carried in the air by the wind, touch a person it is capable of emancipating him."[4] Lakṣmīdhara on the basis of the Vāmana Purāṇa[5] and Vallālasen on the authority of the Matsya Purāṇa[6] also have described its importance as a place of pilgrimage, dāna and sacrifices.

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[1] *Mbh.*, *Vanaparva*, Ch. 80. 20-21.

[2] Ibid, Ch. 83. 90.

[3] *Padma Purāṇa* (*Sriṣṭi*), 15-19.

[4] *Viṣṇu Dh.S.*, Ch. 85, 1-3, *Puṣkara* as a great *tīrtha* is praised in the British Museum Fragmentary Inscription of the Ascetic Vakulrāja., *IA*, XIII, p. 250.

[5] *Pṛthvīrājavijaya*, V, 43 and 45. For a poetical description of the sanctity of *Puṣkara* see also *canto* I.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 147.

Fasts and Festivals

The other popular characteristic of Indian religious life, almost as important as image worship and pilgrimages, was the institution of the Vratas and festivals. Al-Biruni and Gardizi describe them in details.[7]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 117.

[2] *IA*, XIX, p. 218.

[3] *ASIR*, 1902-3, p. 256.

[4] *Mbh. Vanaparva*, Ch. 83.

[5] *Tīrtha* (*KKT*), pp. 175-76; Cf. *Vāmana Purāṇa*, Ch. 52.

[6] *Dānasāgara*, p. 37; Cf. *Matsya Purāṇa*, Ch. 22.

[7] The Chapter on the Festivals and Festive days has been translated into Persian by Gardizi (MS. Ouseley 240, Bodleian Library, Oxford). In the following pages references to the MS. are taken from B.P. Mazumdar's *Socio-Economic History of Northern India* (1030-1194 A.D.). With this calendar of festivals are to be compared the treatise of H.H. Wilson, '*The Religious Festivals of the Hindus*' in his '*Essays and Lectures*', II,

Fasts (Vratas)

During the period under consideration fasts or vratas were gaining in popularity. In the Purāṇas we get enormous material relating to different vratas. They offered people opportunities to observe a course of religious life characterised by austerities and self-denial. According to Al-Biruni, fasting was with the Hindus voluntary. It was abstaining from food for a certain length of time which might be different in duration and in the manner in which it was carried out.[1]

Various Methods of Fasting

Al-Biruni mentions the various methods of fasting which were in vogue during his times. The ordinary middle process of fasting was like this : The day of fast was determined, the man who wanted to keep fast kept in his mind the name of that being whose benevolence he wished to gain thereby and for whose sake he would fast. The being might be a god, or an angel, or some other being. Then he prepared himself for the fast. He took his meals on the day before the fast day at noon, cleaned his teeth and fixed his thoughts on the fasting of the following day. From that moment he abstained from food. On the fast-day in the morning he cleaned his teeth, washed himself and performed daily duties. He took water in his hand, and sprinkled it into four directions, and pronounced the name of the deity for whom he fasted, and remained in the same condition till the day after the fast-day. On the next day it was obligatory for him to break the fast in the morning or at noon, which he could do according to his liking. This kind of fast was called 'Upavāsa', i.e, the fasting; for the not

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p. 151, seq. This chapter as well as the preceding one would perhaps receive much light from the *Jyotirvidhābharaṇam*, Ch. XX; Cf. Weber (*Journal of the German Oriental Society*, Vols. XXII, p, 719 and XXIV, p. 399).

[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 172. *Vrata* means a vow. Nārāyaṇa defines it as a resolve to be followed for a long period of time. (*Vratakāṇḍa*, KKT, Introduction, p. XXII). According to Lakṣmīdhara a *Vrata* is a resolution based on *Śāstra* to the effect that this would be done by him and this would not be done (*Gṛhasthakāṇḍa*, KKT, p. 274).

eating from one noon to the following was called *ekanakta*, not fasting.[1]

Another kind of fasting was called Kṛcchara. According to it a man had to take his food on some day at noon, and on the following day in the evening. On the third he could not take anything except, if by chance something was offered to him without his asking for it. On the fourth day he had his fast.[2]

Another kind was called Paraka. For this a man had to take his food at noon on three successive days. Then he had to transfer his eating-hour to the evening for three further consecutive days. Then he fasted for three consecutive days without break.[3]

Another kind of fasting was called Candrāyaṇa. For this fast a man fasted on the full moon day; on the following day he had to take only a mouthful, on the third day double of this amount and on the fourth day the three-fold of it, & c. & c. going on thus till the day of new moon. On that day he fasted; on the following days he again diminished his food by one mouthful a day till he again fasted on the day of full moon.[4]

Another kind of fasting was called māsavāsa (māsopavāsa), for which a man had uninterruptedly to fast all the days of a month without ever breaking fast.[5]

Reward of Fasting in the Single Month

After mentioning the various forms of fast, he further records the rewards of fasting. "If a man fasts all the days of Caitra, he obtains wealth and joy over the nobility of his children. If he fasts Vaisakha, he will be a lord over his tribe and great in his army. If he fasts Jyaishtha, he will be favourite of the women. If he fasts Ashadha, he will obtain wealth. If he fasts Sravana, he obtains wisdom. If he fasts Bhadrapada, he obtains health and valour, riches and cattle. If he fasts Asvayuja, he will always be victorious over his enemies. If he fasts Kartika, he will be grand in the eyes of people and will obtain his wishes. If he fasts Margasirsha, he will be born in the most beautiful and fertile country. If he fasts Pausha, he obtains a high reputation. If he fasts Magha, he obtains innumerable wealth. If he fasts Phalgun, he will be beloved. He, however, who fasts during all the months of the year, only twelve times breaking the fast, will reside in paradise 10,000 years and will thence return to life as the member of a noble, high and respected family."[1]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 172.

[2] Ibid, p. 173.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 173. In the *Smṛtis* like *Devala* and *Bṛhatayama*, the *Candrāyaṇa Vrata* is mentioned for purifying oneself from some kind of sin. (*Devala*, 26; *Bṛhatayama*, 2. 4.)

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 173.

On the Determination of the Fast-Days

Al-Biruni has a chapter on Hindu fast days.[2] Fasts were observed on some auspicious days. We are told by Al-Biruni that the eighth and eleventh days of the white half of every month were fast days, except in the case of the leap month, for it was "disregarded, being considered unlucky."

The eleventh was specially holy to Vāsudeva, because he protected the people of Mathurā from the wrath of Indra. Therefore they fasted on this day in the state of the most punctilious cleanness and stayed awake all the night.[3]

"When the moon is in Rohini, the fourth of her stations, on the eighth day of the black half, it is a fast day called Jayanti. Giving alms on this day is an expiation for all sins." Al-Biruni further writes, "Evidently this condition of the fast day does not in general apply to all months but in particular only to Bhadrapada, since Vasudeva was born in this month and on this day, whilst the moon stood in the station Rohini."[4] Al-Biruni quotes the Viṣṇu-Dharma and writes,

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 173-174.
2. Ibid, II, Ch. LXXV.
3. Ibid, p. 175.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 175. On the festival of the birth of *Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa Janmā-*

“When the moon stands in the Punarvasu, the seventh of her station, on the eleventh day of the white of half of the month, this is fast day called Atj (? Attataja). If a man does works of piety on this day, he will be enabled to obtain whatever he wishes.’”[1] The sixth day of Caitra was a fast day holy to the Sun.[2] The sixth and seventh days of the bright fortnight Caitra were holy to the sun. The observations of Al-Biruni can be corroborated from the Kṛtyaratnākara.[3]

In the month of Ashadha, when the moon stands in Anuradha, the seventeenth of her signs, there was a fast day, “holy to Vasudeva called Devasini”.[4] The day of full moon in the Sravana month was a fast day holy to Somanatha.[5] When in the month of Asvayuja the moon stands in Al-sharatan (the lunar station) and the sun is in Virgo, it was observed as a fast day.[6] The eighth of the same month was also observed as fast day holy to Bhagavatī. Fasting was broken when the moon rose.[7] The fifth day of Bhadrapada was a fast-day holy to the sun, called Shat.[8] When in this month the moon stands in Rohini, it was a fast day for the birth of Vāsudeva.[9] When in the month of Kārtika the moon stands in Revatī, the last of her station, it was a fast day in commemoration of the waking up of Vāsudeva. It was called deotthini, i.e. the rising of the Deva. On that day people soiled themselves with cow dung, and broke fasting by feeding upon a mixture of cow's milk, urine and dung. This day was the first of the five days which was called Bhīṣma Pañcarātri. People had

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ṣṭamī); Cf. Weber, *IA*, 1874, p. 21, 1871, p. 161; *ZDMG*, VI, p. 92. In the *Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa* are given its full details, Ch. XXVI, *Śrikṛṣṇa khaṇḍa*.

[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 176, Cf. H.H. Wilson, *Essays and Lectures*, II, p. 232.

[2] Ibid.

[3] *KR*, pp. 121-123.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

fast in honour of Vāsudeva.[1] On the sixth day of Pauṣa was a fasting in honour of the sun.[2] On the third day of Māgha there was fasting for the women, not for the men. It was called Gaur-t-r (Gaurī-tṛtīyā ?) and lasted the whole day and night. On the following morning they made presents to the nearest relations of their husbands.[3]

Among the fasts mentioned by Al-Biruni the Devaśayanī ekādaśī in (the bright half Āṣāḍha) the eighth of the same month (a fast day holy to Bhagawatī), Janmāṣṭamī, Devotthānī and Bhīṣma-Pañcarātrī), the sixth day of Pauṣa (a fast in honour of the sun) and Gaurī tṛtīyā on the third of Māgha may be presumed to have been observed during the time of Al-Biruni because they are still current in Rajasthan.[4] On the days of fasting, which were sacred to particular gods, people observed fast. Ekādaśī (eleventh day of each fortnight) was one such day of fasting and prayers. It is said that Pṛthvīrāja III had broken this fast on the historic day of the battle of Tarain[5] (1192 A.D.). There were many days which were considered auspicious for giving gifts. Ekādaśī was one of these.[6] Among the various ekādaśīs the most famous was Devotthānī or Prabodhinī Ekādaśī falling on the eleventh day of the bright half of Kārtika, on which day Rathayātrā (gods-procession) was celebrated.[7] Most of the Vratas are of the Kāmya type or optional, i.e. vrata performed with the object of gaining something.[8] A vrata was regarded as a means of gaining worldly happiness as well as attaining Svarga after

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 176; Cf. H.H. Wilson, *Glossary of Technical Terms*, p. 133, 134, 143 and H. Elliot, *Memoirs on the History, Folklore, and Distribution of the* Races of the *North-Western Provinces of India*. I, p. 245; Wilson, "*Essays and Lectures*' II, 203; *Agni Purāṇa*. Ch. 205.
2. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177.
3. Ibid.
4. Sharma, *Rajasthan Through the Ages*, p. 468.
5. *Prabandhacintāmaṇi* (Tawney), p 190, *Indian Culture*, X, p. 69.
6. *IA*, XLIII, p. 193 : Even Jainas observed Ekādaśi and made donations. (*EI*, XXXIII, p. 46).
7. *EI*, II, p. 124.
8. *Vrata-Kāṇḍa* (*KKT*) Introduction, p XXIII.

death. The list of vratas provided by Al-Biruni clearly emphasizes these two objects. This list of the vratas can be also compared with that of Lakṣmīdhara, who groups them under the following heads :

1. Vāra-Vratas, i.e., fasts on week days.
2. Tithi-Vratas, i.e., fasts on certain days of the lunar months.
3. Nakṣatra-Vratas, i.e., fasts on the days of certain lunar stations.
4. Māsa-Vratas, i e., fasts in certain months.
5. Saṁvatsara-Vratas, i.e., fasts for a full year.
6. Miscellaneous Vratas.

Under these heads he mentions a long list of Vratas in the Vratakāṇḍa of Kṛtyakalpataru, a monumental work of its kind. Besides, the Dharmaśāstras and the Purāṇas also speak of the Prāyaścitta-Vratas, i.e., the expiatory vows. Al-Biruni also refers to some of these.[1] Like tīrthas and festivals they represented the popular side of Hinduism.

Festivals

The Hindus celebrated a large number of festivals. Al-Biruni describes various festivals, most of which are observed to this day. Some of them were celebrated with great joy and merry-making and people gave various kinds of gifts to the Brāhmaṇas and others. Most of the festivals, according to Al-Biruni, were celebrated by women and children only.[2] Although the statement of Al-Biruni should be accepted with reservation, generally even in modern times festivals are celebrated by the women-folk and children.

Festivals of Caitra (March-April)

The people of Kashmir celebrated a festival called Agdus (?) on the 2nd of the month of Caitra in memory of a victory gained by their king Muttai over the Turks.[3] The sixth day of Caitra was a fast day holy to the sun.[1] Caṇḍeśvar also says that on this day the sun was worshipped.[2] On the 11th there was a festival called Hindoli Caitra on which day Vāsudeva was swung in temples.[3] But Al-Biruni and Gardizi (who also mentions it) do not say whether it was observed on the dark or bright fortnight, though on the 11th Caitra (bright) a festival was observed in honour of Rukmiṇī.[4] The devotees of Vāsudeva performed the same in their houses during the whole day and made merry. Gardizi further tells us that on this day the women used to decorate themselves, put on their ornaments and demanded presents from their husbands. But this kind of festival, according to Al-Biruni, was observed on the full moon day of Caitra and the feast was called Bahnd (Vasanta ?).[5] In Ratnāvalī, Harṣa gives a very interesting description of the spring festival—Madanotsava—celebrated in the month of Caitra on the full moon day.[6] It was a very popular festival and is mentioned in various literary and other works.[7] It was like our present Holi festival.[8] In Rajasthan during the Cauhāna rule people celebrated the spring festival in honour of Kāmadeva and used to spray coloured water on one another.[9] On the 22nd there was a festival called 'Caitra Cashati', a day of merriment, holy to Bhagavatī. On this occasion people used to wash and give alms.[10]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 172-173.
[2] Al-Biruni, II, p. 178.
[3] Ibid.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 176.
2. *KR*, pp. 121-123.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 178; Gardizi, f. 216 A.
4. *Niyata* (*KKT*), pp. 383-384, *KR*, p. 128.
5. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 178-179, Hemacandra describes it as '*Phaggu*' in the *Deśīnāmamālā*, VI. 82.
6. *Ratnāvalī*, Act. I, vv. 10 ff.
7. *Raghuvaṁśa*, IV.46; *Mālavikāgnimitra*, act. III; *Śākuntala*, *act.* IV; Hemādri, *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi*, II, (*Vrata khaṇḍa*, Pt. I); *KKT*, *Niyata*, *KR*, pp. 128, 137-139; *Kālaviveka*, p. 470; *Rāj*. VII.128; *KSS*. LXXXV.6, VI.108-109, IV. 35, X.87-89 etc.
8. In modern times *Holi is* observed on full moon day of *Phālguna* (Gupte, *Hindu Holidays*, pp. 87-91).
9. Sharma, *ECD*, p. 266.
10. Al-Biruni, II, p. 179.

Festivals of Vaisakha (April-May)

On the 3rd of Vaiśākha women celebrated the festival of Gaur·t·r (gaurī tṛtīyā ?), holy to Gaurī, the wife of Mahādeva. They fasted, washed and dressed themselves gaily. They also lighted lamps before the image of Gaurī and played on the swings. On the following day they gave alms and ate.[1] The description is quite correct. Hemādri prescribes details of worship, including fasting, but omits swing as a part of the festival. However, he puts the date on the third day of the bright half of Caitra.[2] Most probably Al-Biruni was misinformed in putting the third day of Vaiśākha instead of the fourth day of the bright half of the month of Jyaiṣṭha. On that day Umā's birth day was celebrated by women and she was worshipped amidst songs and dances and alms were distributed.[3] Further Al-Biruni and Gardizi describe a strange festival held on the tenth day of Vaiśākha Śukla. The Brāhmaṇas were invited by the king. They proceeded forth to the open field and lit fire for sacrifices in "sixteen different spots and in four different groups." For five days till full moon the fire was lit and on the 16th they returned home.[4] Al-Biruni also mentions Vernal equinox called Vasanta, the day of the festival was determined by calculation and the Brāhmaṇas were invited.[5] Both these festivals are not mentioned in any other work.

Festivals of Jyaistha (May-June)

According to Al-Biruni and Gardizi, the first day of the bright fortnight of Jyaiṣṭha was celebrated with the throwing of the "first fruits of all the seeds into the water in order to gain thereby a favourable prognostic."[6] This festivalcum-custom is unknown to the digest writers of our period. The full moon day was a festival to the women, called "Rupa-Panca ?" or Rupe-manch.[1] Probably it was Sāvitrī Vrata day. According to Bhoja, women saved themselves from widowhood by observing this Vrata.[2] It is still observed on this day by women.[3]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II p. 179; Gardizi, *MS*, f. 216.

[2] Hemādri, *CC*, II, pt I; *Vratakhaṇḍa*, Ch. 7, pp. 450-52.

[3] *Niyata* (*KKT*), p. 387; *KR*, p. 186.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 179.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

Festivals of Asadha (June-July)

According to Al-Biruni, all the days of the month of Āṣāḍha, were devoted to alms giving. It was also called ahari. During this time the house-hold was provided with new vessels.[4] Al-Biruni also mentions that the full-moon day of Āṣāḍha was holy to Vāsudeva and people observed fasts. They abstained from eating meat and flesh. They made the earth their bed without any covering, and did not use a bedstead raised above the earth. In the same month Devaśayanī ekādaśī was observed. Deva, as it was said, was sleeping because it was the beginning of the four months during which Vāsudeva slept.[5] According to Lakṣmīdhara, Jīmūtavāhana, Caṇḍeśvara and Bhoja, on this day, Viṣṇu sleeps and his followeres observe fasts and worship him, which is followed by singing and dancing.[6]

Festivals of Sravana (July-August)

On the full-moon's day of Śrāvaṇa people gave banquets to the Brāhmaṇas.[7] Hemcandra in Deśīnāmamālā calls it by the name of Voralli, which was held on the 14th day of the bright half of Śrāvaṇa.[8] Al-Biruni further adds that this

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 179; Gardizi, f. 216.
2. *Rājamārtaṇḍa* (*ABORI*), p. 335; *KR*, pp. 192-95; *CC*, II, Pt. II, Ch. XXI, pp. 272-74.
3. Gupte, *Hindu Holi Days*, p. 238.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 179.
5. Ibid, p 176.
6. *Niyata*, (*KKT*), p. 391; *Kālaviveka*, pp. 175-185; *KR*, pp. 204-5, *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, p. 314.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 179.
8. *Deśīnāmamālā*, VIII, 81.

day was observed as a holy day in honour of Somanātha.[1] The Nadola plate (VS. 1218/1161 A.D.) states that on this day Alhaṇadeva made gifts to the Brāhamaṇas and Gurus.[2] Dr. A.K. Majumdar suggests that it was a Śaiva festival.[3]

Festivals of Bhadra (August-September)

Many festivals have been mentioned by Al-Biruni during this month.

Al-Biruni and Gardizi refer to the Pitṛpakṣa (the half of the month of the fathers). People used to distribute alms on the occasion for fifteen days in the name of the fathers.[4] According to Hemcandra this was Mahālaya-pakṣa (Mahalavakha).[5] During this period Śrāddhas for dead relations were performed. Abhayatilaka Gaṇi, commenting on Dvyāśraya, observes that during this period a man was expected to live like Brahmacārin and had to abstain from betels, tooth-brush, oils, medicine and food offered by others.[6] The Kashmiris on this day deposited the bones of their dead relations who died during the year, in the sacred Gaṅgā-lake.[7] According to Al-Biruni, on the third Bhādrapada there was a festival called Harbali (?) for the women. It was their custom to sow all kinds of seeds in baskets before a number of days of Harbali. When the seeds commenced growing they brought the baskets on this day. They threw roses and perfumes on them and played with each other during the whole night. On the following morning they brought them to the ponds, washed them, washed themselves and gave alms.[8] Probably Al-Biruni refers to the Haritālikā festival which was observed according to Jīmūtavāhana on the fourth day of the bright half of Bhādra.[1] According to Bhoja, it was sacred to Pārvatī.[2]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 177.

[2] *EI*, IX, pp. 65-66.

[3] A.K. Majumdar, '*The Calukyas* of *Gujarat*, p. 308, V.P. Mazumdar disagrees with A.K. Majumdar, *Socio Economic History* of *Northern India*, p. 284.

[4] Al-Biruni, II, p. 180, Gardizi, f. 217, B.

[5] *Deśīnāmamālā*, VI. 127.

[6] *Dvyāśraya*, III, v. 17.

[7] *Rāj.*, VIII. 1007, 1008.

[8] Al-Biruni, II, p. 180.

On the sixth of this month which was called Gaihat (?), people offered food to those who were in prison.[3] Al-Biruni also mentions that the fifth day of Bhādra was holy to the sun, called Shaṭa.[4] Lakṣmīdhara and Jīmūtavāhana do not mention this day as holy to the sun. Most Probably sun-worship was more popular in the western region of India, with which the Muslim writers were more familiar. Caṇḍeśvara informs that on the sixth day the sun has to be worshipped.[5] Probably in Mithilā it was observed as a festival holy to the sun. Al-Biruni mentions the fifth day instead of the sixth as sacred to the sun. Actually people observed a fast on the previous day, i.e. the fifth, as mentioned by Al-Biruni.

On the eighth of Bhādrapada women celebrated the festival called Dhruvagṛha (?). Pregnant women desiring to have children ate well growing grain-fruit so that "their children should be healthy."[6] According to Caṇḍeśvara if women observe fasting and worship Śaṁkara and Gaṇeśa, with grass, date, palms, cocoanut and other fruits on this day known as Dūrvāṣṭamī, the worshipper will be rewarded with learning, progeny and wealth.[7] Gardizi also mentions Daruphar (?) and tells us that the devotees ate grapes but did not give these to thir sons.[8]

On the 8th day of the dark half of Bhādra Kṛṣṇajanmāṣṭamī was celebrated. People observed it as the day of fasting.[9] But Lakṣmīdhara permits fruits and milk.[10]

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1. *Kālaviveka*, p. 411.
2. *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, p. 323.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 180.
4. Ibid, p. 177.
5. *KR*, pp. 278-79.
6. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 180-181.
7. *KR*, pp. 283-85.
8. Gardizi, f. 217 B.
9. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177.
10. *Niyata*, pp. 395-96; *KR*, p. 257.

A much venerated festival was observed on the 11th Bhādrapada called Pārvati (?). This was a name of a thread, which the priest made from material presented to him for this purpose, of the same length as the statue of Vāsudeva was high.[1] On the first day of the dark-half began the Karara (?) festival which continued for seven days. People used to adorn their children nicely and to play with various animals. On the seventh day men adorned themselves and celebrated a festival. During the rest of the month they always adorned the children towards the end of the day and gave alms to the Brāhmaṇas and performed works of piety.[2] When the moon stands in her fourth station, Rohiṇī, people celebrated a festival for three days, called Gunalah d (?). It was related with the birth of Vāsudeva. These were the days when people celebrated it by 'making merry by playing with each other.'[3] On the authority of Jīvaśarman.'[4] Al-Biruni says that on the 26th and 27th of Bhādrapada, the people of Kashmir celebrated a festival called 'gana' (?), which was closely associated with Mahādeva.[5]

Festivals of Asvin or Asvayuja (Sept.-October)

On the 8th of Āśvin when the moon stands in the nineteenth station, Mūla, the festival holy to Mahānavamī (the sister of Mahādeva) was celebrated with the sucking of sugarcane. At that time people offered the first-fruits of sugar and all other things to her image which was called Bhagavatī. He further writes, "They give much alms before it and kill kids. He who does not possess any things to offer stands upright by the side of the idol, without ever sitting down, and will sometimes pounce upon whomsoever he meets and kill him."[6] Presumably this was the festival of Durgāpūjā. The sucking of sugar-cane as a part of the festival is interesting for Hemacandra mentions a similar festival in the Deśīnāmamālā.[1] In the Dvyāśraya, Hemacandra calls Durgāpūjā as Navāha and his commentator Abhayatilaka Gaṇi calls Navarātra. It corresponds to Al-Biruni's Mahānavamī on which occasion animals were sacrificed.[2] According to Abhayatilakagaṇi, who quotes a verse from the Devīmāhātmya of the Mārkaṇḍey Purāṇa, the worship of Caṇḍī during the autumn was highly beneficial.[3] Bhoja also mentions that during the Navarātra period Durgā was worshipped.[4]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 181.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Sachau is of opinion that both Al-Biruni and Jīvaśarman were contemporary (*Al-Biruni*, II, p. 309, Cf. I, p. 162,)

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 181.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 180; Gardizi, f. 217 A.

On the 15th when the moon stands in the last of her stations, Revatī, there was the festival Puhai (?), when people wrangled with each other and played with the animals. It was holy to Vāsudeva.[5] On the 16th there was a festival when alms were given to the Brāhmaṇas.[6] On the 23rd there was the festival Aśoka, also called Ahoi. It was the day of merriment and wrangling.[7] In modern times Aśoka tree is worshipped.

Festivals of Kartika (October-November)

Al-Biruni describes the festival of Dīvālī, which was celebrated on the first Kārtika, or new moon's day, "When the sun marches in Libra, is called Dibali. The people bathe, dress festively, make presents to each other of betel-leaves and arecanuts; they ride to the temple to give alms and play merrily with each other till noon. In the night they light a great number of light, a great number of lamps in every place so that the air is perfectly clear. The cause of this festival is that Lakṣmī, the wife of Vasudeva, once a year on this day liberates Bali, the son of Virocana, who is a prisoner in the seventh earth and allows him to go out into the world. There-

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1. *Deśīnāmamālā*, I. 22.
2. *Kumārapālabhūpālacarita*, VII. 199-10; *Prabandhakoṣa*, *Hemasuriprabandha*, 47, *Kumārapālaprabandha*, 47.
3. *Mārkaṇḍeya Pūrāṇa*, Ch. 92, v.11.
4. *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, pp. 323-327.
5. Al-Biruni, II, p. 180.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

fore the festival is called Balirājya, i.e. the principality of Bali. The Hindus maintain that this time was a time of luck in the Kritayuga, and they are happy because the feast-day in question resembles that time in the Kritayuga."[1] Gardizi also mentions it and makes a similar statement.[2] The worship of Lakṣmī in connection with Dīvālī is a correct account. The Prabandhacintāmaṇi mentions that Dīvālī was celebrated in Malwa.[3] Bhoja refers to a festival called Sukharātri.[4] He says that on that occasion Lakṣmi was worshipped at dusk and lamps were lit up at every place. This seems to be the equivalent of modern Dīpāvalī.[5] Before the Dīvālī Mahālakṣmī was worshipped.[6] On this day kings indulged in various sports, pastimes and merry-making and made themselves ready for conquest (Vijaya-Yātrā).[7] Though Mahālakṣmī worship was associated with Dīvālī, it is difficult to accept that Bali Pūjā succeeded Dīvālī without any interval. In this regard Al-Biruni is misinformed. Balipūjā, however, did not take place on the Dīvālī night. According to Jīmūtavāhana, Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, Balirājya-pravartinī was held on Pratipada, after Kārtika amāvasyā (dark night).[8] In Dvyāśraya Hemacandra mentions the Bali-mahā, which is explained by Abhayatilaka Gaṇi as Balirājyadina. It was held on the first day of the bright half of Kārtika, that is the day following the Dīvālī.[9] We can, therefore, say that Dīvālī and Bali Pūja were not celebrated on the same day.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 182. According to the *Skanda Purāṇa* the worship of Bali was to be performed at night. His image, which was drawn on the ground with various colours, was worshipped with flowers and fruits. Along with it gifts were given and lamps were lit in his honour. (*Skanda Purāṇa*, as quoted in the *Kalpadruma*, p. 232).
2. Gardizi, f. 219 A.
3. *Prabandhacintāmaṇi*, (Tr. Tawny), p. 46.
4. *Rājamārtaṇḍa* (*ABORI*, XXXVI), p. 329.
5. See the *Vācaspatyam-Koṣa*.
6. P.K. Gode. *Some Notes on the History of Diwali Festival* (ABORI, XXVI), p. 237.
7. *Karpūramañjarī*, p. 101.
8. *Kālaviveka*, pp. 406-407; *Niyat*, (*KKT*), pp. 420-421; *KR*, pp. 410-11.
9. A.K. Majumdar, *Caulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 305 fn. 86, p. 484.

Al-Biruni further informs us that in the same month (of Kārtika) when full-moon is perfect, people gave banquets and adorned their women during all the days of the black half.[1] B.P. Mazumdar identifies it with the Kaumudī mahotsava which was held in the honour of Śiva on the fourteenth day of the bright half of the month of Kārtika.[2] In the Priyadarśikā of Harṣa there is mention of this festival.[3] It fell on the full moon day in the month of Āśvina.[4] However, Lakṣmīdhara, quoting from the Skanda Puraṇa, tells us that the king took the lead in organising the festival.[5] Houses were cleaned and whitewashed. People dressed themselves in their best. At night lamps were lit in streets and houses. There was music and dance everywhere. The Brāhmaṇas were feasted on this occasion.[6]

According to Al-Biruni, on the eleventh of the bright half of the Kārtika people observe the Devotthinī in commemoration of the waking up of Vāsudeva. It was a day of fasting and people "soil themselves with dung of cows and break fasting (on the twelfth) by feeding upon a mixture of cow's milk, urine and dung."[7] Al-Biruni correctly describes the festival, which can be corroborated with the descriptions of Rājamārtaṇḍa, Niyatakālakāṇḍa and Kṛtyaratnākara.[8] According to Rājaśekhara, the people kept on this day a night-long vigil in honour of Mahādeva.[9] The five days beginning with the Devotthanī Ekādaśī upto the end of the month were the fast days, called the Bhīṣmapañcarātāi.[10]

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 182.
2. B.P. Mazumdar, *Socio-Economic History of Northern India*, p. 297.
3. *Priyadarśikā*, Act. II, p. 70. According to *Tilakamañjarī Kaumudīmahotsava* was celebrated on the full moon day of *Kārtika*. (T.M., p. 220).
4. *Liṅga Purāṇa* as quoted in *Kālasāra*, I, p. 176; *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch. 207, *Varāha Purāṇa* as quoted in Hemadris *Kālanirṇaya*, Ch. XVII; Cf. Sharma, *Social Life in Northern India*, p. 259.
5. *Rājadharma* (*KKT*), pp. 182-183.
6. *Skanda Purāṇa* quoted in *Vīramitrodaya*, IV, p. 419.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177.
8. *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, p. 315; *Niyata* (*KKT*) p. 427; KR, pp. 420, 427; Cf. Abhayatilaka Gaṇi on *Dvyāśraya*, III, 25.
9. *Karpūramañjarī*, XVIII, p. 101.
10. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177; *Agni Purāṇa*, Ch. 205.

Festivals of Margasirsa : Agrahayana (Nov.–Dec.)

Al-Biruni and Gardizi inform us that on the third Mārgaśīrṣa women observed a festival called Guvan-batrij (-tṛtīyā ?) which is a feast of the women, sacred to Gaurī. "They meet in the houses of the rich among them; they put several silver statues of the goddess on a throne, and perfume it and play with each other the whole day. On the following morning they give alms."[1] This festival is unknown to medieval contemporary digests. Only the later authorities, Caṇḍeśvara and Hemādri mention it. According to them, Gaurī was worshipped in the bright half of the month.[2] Al-Biruni further tells us that on the full moon day of the same month there was another festival of the women.[3] According to Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, on this day Himapūjā was celebrated by women, and they were specially respected.[4]

Festivals of Pausa (December-January)

Al-Biruni mentions two festivals which were observed in this month. On the eighth day of the white half, called Ashataka, Brāhmaṇas were offered "dishes prepared from the plant Atriplex hortensis" and showed attentions to them.[5] According to Caṇḍeśvara, this day was holy to Mahādeva. On this occasion Brāhmaṇas were specially fed and then Śaivas and Pāśupatas were fed.[6] The second festival was celebrated on the eighth day of the black half which was called Sakartam. On this occasion people ate turnips.[7] According to Lakṣmīdhara they took vegetables (Śāka).[8] On the sixth day of the bright half a fast, according to Al-Biruni was observed in honour of the sun.[1]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 182; Gardizi, f. 219A.

[2] KR, pp. 452-543, *CC. Vratakhaṇḍa*, II, part I, pp. 402-405.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 183; Gardizi, f. 219A.

[4] *Niyata* (*KKT*), pp. 433-434; KR, pp. 471-72.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 183; Gardizi, f. 219B.

[6] KR, pp. 480-482.

[7] Al-Biruni, II, p. 183.

[8] *Niyata*, p. 434; KR, pp. 478-79.

Festivals of Magha (January-February)

The third day of the bright half of Māgha was sacred to Gaurī. It was known as Mahatrij (Māgha Tṛtīyā ?), which was observed by women only. They met in the houses of the most prominent among them and worshipped the image of Gaurī with offerings of costly dresses, pleasant perfumes and nice dishes. "In each meeting place, they put 108 jugs full of water, and after the water has become cool, they wash with it four times at the four quarters of that night. On the following day they give alms, they give banquets and receive guests. The women's washing with cold water is common to all the days of this month."[2] Though Caṇḍeśvara does not give the details of women's bath, he mentions the festival as Rasakalyāṇīvratam.[3] According to Lakṣmīdhara it was observed specially by a woman on the fourth day of the bright half of Māgha.[4] Al-Biruni mentions three more festivals of this month. The first was Camaha on the full-moon's day when lamps were lit on all high places.[5] But according to the digest of this period, only 'tila' was offered to the manes on this day.[6] The second festival was observed on the 23rd which was called Mansartaku and also Mahatan. On this day people received guests and fed them on meat and large black peas."[7] On the twentyninth "when there is only a remainder of 3 day-minutes, i.e. 1 1/5 hour, all the Hindus enter the water and duck under in it seven times."[8] The last two festivals do not find mention in the contemporary works.

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177.
2. Ibid, p. 183; Gardizi, f. 219B; Cf. Al-Biruni, II, p. 177 for *Gaurī Tṛtīyā.*
3. *KR*, pp. 498-500.
4. *Niyata (KKT)* pp. 437-438; *Cf. KR*, p. 530.
5. Al-Biruni, II, p. 183; Gardizi does not mention it.
6. *Niyata*, (*KKT*) pp. 438-439; *KR*, pp. 512-513.
7. Al-Biruni, II, p. 183. But Gardizi's MS. f. 220A puts the date as 27th and calls the festival as *Mansutak* and *Hamatan.*
8. Ibid.

Festivals of Phalguna (February-March)

According to Al-Biruni, the festival called Purartaku was held on 8th Phālguna, on which day various dishes from flour and butter were prepared for the Brāhmaṇas.[1] But he does not mention the bright or dark half of Phalguna, the 8th of which was observed as a festive day. On the eighth of the dark half of this month, we are told that the birth of Sīta was celebrated. The Brāhmaṇas, friends and relatives were fed on this occasion.[2]

On the full-moon day of Phālguna, there was a feast to the women. It was called Odad (?) or also dholā (i.e. dola), when "they make fire on places lower than those on which they make it on the festival camaha and they throw the fire out of the village."[3] Gardizi adds that this festival was observed by women only.[4] Hemacandra says that on the full-moon day of Phālguna the Dola festival was observed.[5] On this day, according to Abhayatilaka Gaṇi, children were kept securely in a room and were offered sugarcandy and rice.[6] According to Bhoja, the car festival of Skanda was celebrated and coloured perfumes were thrown on the occasion.[7] Undoubtedly the festival of Dhola corresponds to the Holī of modern times, which is extremely popular in Northern India.

According to Al-Biruni, on the following night, i.e., that of the 16th, the festival of Śivarātri was observed. On this occasion people worshipped Mahādeva during the whole night. They remained awake and did not lie down to sleep, and offered to him perfumes and flowers.[8] The date of this festival, as mentioned by Al-Biruni, is incorrect. The festival should be observed on the 14th of the blackhalf of Phālguna, According to Lakṣmīdhara and Caṇḍeśvara, on this day Śiva is worshipped.[1] It was indeed a very popular festival. It was celebrated in Rajasthan and Maddhyapradesh in the month of Māgha.[2] In Kashmir Śivarātri was considered an important festival, when kings made presents.[3] In the end Al-Biruni mentions two more festivals, one of which was observed on the 23rd of Phāluguna. It was called puyattan (?). On this occasion people ate rice with butter and sugar.[4] The second festival was observed by the Hindus of Multan. It was called Sambapurayātrā and was celebrated in honour of the sun.[5]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 183.

[2] *Niyata.* (*KKT*), p. 439; *KR*, p. 518.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 183-184.

[4] Gardizi, f. 220A.

[5] *Dvyāśraya*, V. 141; Cf. A.K. Majumdar, *Caulukyas of Gujarat*, p. 306; "The dola or dolā festival was held according to Abhayatilaka Gaṇi, on the 14th day of the bright half of *Caitra.*"

[6] *Dvyāśraya*, V. 141.

[7] *Rājamārtaṇḍa*, p. 232 vv. 227-28.

[8] Al-Biruni, II, p. 184; Gardizi, f. 220A.

The Sacrifices

The vedic house-holder performed sacrifices morning and evening to the house-hold fire. For the performance of these sacrifices wood of two kinds of trees, palāśa and darbha, was used. Fire was highly venerated by the Hindus and they offered flowers to it.[6] This shows that vedic sacrifices were still alive specially among the Brāhmaṇas. The Atrisaṁhitā says that the food of a Brāhmaṇa who does not keep Agnihotra should not be accepted.[7] The existence of agntihotra is mentioned by Al-Biruni. He observes that a Brāhmaṇa, who was busy with the service of one fire, was called Ishtin; one who served three fires was called Agnihotrin, and if he, besides, offered an offering to the fire, he was called Dīkṣita.[8] 'Agnihotra however, was too troublesome to be long practised and the worship of the idols which gradually was now introduced into every house left the other worship neglected.' Some of the rituals

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1. *Niyata*, (*KKT*), p. 440; *KR*, pp. 520-21.
2. *EI*, XI, pp. 31-32, p. 45; XXI, p. 150.
3. *Rāj.*, I, 166, VIII, 70 and 111.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 184.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid, p. 131.
7. *Atrisaṁhitā*, v. 254.
8. Al-Biruni, I, p. 102.

required animal sacrifices for certain deities.[1] Animal sacrifice was in vogue during this period. Al-Biruni informs us that the worshippers of Bhagavatī (Durgā), Cāmuṇḍā, Vārāhī, etc. killed sheep and buffaloes with axes (kuṭhāra) to offer them as naivedya to their gods and goddesses.[2]

Al-Biruni gives the traditional account of the Aśvamedha sacrifice.[3] He further adds that since the sacrifices differed in duration only such persons as had a long life could perform some of these. Most of them had been abolished and only few of them remained and were practised during his time.[4] He also describes the fire offerings in general.[5] "According to the Hindus, the fire eats every thing. Therefore it becomes defiled; if anything unclean is mixed up with it, as, e.g. water. Accordingly they are very punctilious regarding fire and water if they are in the hands of non-Hindus, because they are defiled by being touched by them."[6] Further he says, "That which the fire eats for its share, reverts to the Devas, because the fire comes out of their mouths. What the Brāhmaṇas present to the fire to eat is oil and different careals—wheat, barley and rice—which they throw into the fire."[7]

Daily Ablutions and Sandhyas

Another feature of Hinduism of this period seems to have been the performance of daily ablutions and sandhyās. According to Al-Biruni, a Brāhmaṇa had to wash himself thrice a day : "at the *saṁdhi* of rising, i.e., morning dawn, at the *saṁdhi* of setting, i.e. evening twilight, and between them in the middle of the day."[1] Rājaśekhara mentions the performance of daily ablutions and sandhyās.[2] According to Atri a twice born should recite sandhyā thrice a day.[3] According to Vyāsa the three sandhyās are Gāyatrī, Sarasvatī and Sāvitrī.[4]

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[1] *Mānava Gṛ. S.*, II. 14.; *Āp. Gṛ.S.*, XX. 12-20, *Bhār. Gṛ.S.* II, 10.

[2] Al-Biruni, I, p. 120.

[3] Ibid, I, p, 133, II, pp. 2, 139.

[4] Ibid, II, p. 139.

[5] Ibid, p. 133. Among the domestic rites Dharma Śāstra writers (*Śat. Brāh.* XI, 5, 6.1) enjoin the performance of *Pañca Mahāyajña*, i.e. five great sacrifices namely-(1) *Devayajña* (offering to gods), (2) *Pitṛyajña* (Śrāddha), (3) *Bhūtayajña* (offering of *Bali*), (4) *Brahmayajña* (studying veda) and (5) *Manuṣyajña* (entertainment of guests). According to *Dakṣa* (II. 27-28) a house-holder must perform it and thereby gain merit which cannot be obtained by getting it performed by others on one's behalf.

[6] Ibid, p. 139.

[7] Ibid pp. 139-40

From the foregoing it is clear that the Hindus of this period believed in Saṁskāras, image-worship, tīrthas, fasts and festivals. Many of the rites and customs practised by them may appear to the rational mind superstitious and obscurantist, yet, with some variations and shifts in emphasis, they have continued to this day. These characteristic features of Hinduism distinguish it from other religions of the world. The accounts of Muslim writers, particularly of Al-Biruni, help us in understanding the religious practices and institutions of the early medieval period.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 133.

[2] *Bālabhārata* (ed. Durga Prasad and Parab). Even girls performed *sandhyās*. Bāṇa in his *Kādambarī* (p. 327) mentions Mahāśvetā as performing the *sandhyā* daily and muttering the *Agha marsaṇa mantra*.

[3] *Atri*, quoted in *Ācāramayūkha*, p. 39.

[4] *Vyāsa*, Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

LAW AND PUNISHMENT

The Importance of Administration of Justice

Every organised political community provides for the administration of justice as one of its essential functions. This function is directly connected with the necessity of guaranteeing protection to the people. According to our Law-givers, the protection of the people and the punishment of the wicked constitute the most important duties of the sovereign; in the absence of which there will be a complete disorganisation of society. We may refer to the Chachnama in which Chach tells Chandra that the innumerable subjects should be treated kindly and they should be kept contented and happy by administering justice and equity in such a manner that the strong should not oppress the weak and "we might not be reprehended in the august court of God for lack of judgement or denial of redress."[1] The Jami-ul Hikayat also emphasises the importance of justice and the duty of king to protect the people. It was considered the paramount duty of all those who wielded authority and power to be just and benevolent, in order that those who were weak should be strengthened and protected by the law, and that those who were wealthy should enjoy their riches in peace and security.[2] According to the Lawgivers it was kings' sacred duty to punish the wrong-doers and if he flinched from discharging it, he would go to hell.[3] The king was the fountain-source of justice and was required to devote every day a couple of hours to the administration of justice.[4] Some of the Hindu kings have been praised by the Muslim writers for their good administration of justice and protection of their people.[1] According to Mitākṣarā the protection of the subject is the foremost duty of the king, but protection is not possible without punishing the guilty, and the guilty cannot be punished without their guilt being detected, which is not possible without the administration of justice.[2] Thus the duty of protection and the administration of justice are inseparably connected. According to Idrisi the Hindus never departed in any circumstance from justice and equity.[3]

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[1] *Chachnama*, p. 24.

[2] Elliot, II, pp. 174-175.

[3] *Baudh. Dh.S.*, II, 1.17-18; Kane, *HDS*, Vol. III, p. 57.

[4] *Kaut. Arth.*, I. 19; Kane, *HDS*, Vol. III, pp. 243-4.

The Nature and Sources of Law

Hindu Law is a code of duties. The jurisprudence as dealt with in the Hindu Codes appear "complete and exhaustive, and includes all branches of law suitable to the exigencies of Hindu society and actually prevalent therein."[4] Law, according to Hindu conception, "is that rule of conduct authoritatively imposed by the divine power as proper for man, as a being capable of eternal existence governing all his activities, public and private and affecting inseparably his spiritual and temporal interests."[5] Every step in the life of a Hindu is guarded in the interests of the ultimate end. The Sanskrit word used for law is Dharma. It has a very wide connotation. It includes religious, moral, social and legal duties and can only be defined by its contents.[6] Jaimini defines Dharma as "what is to be fulfilled as the object of a command is duly (Dharma)."[7] as that "which is signified by a direction and leads to a benefit."[8]

Hindu law has not been made by any legislature but is believed to have been made by the Divine Being, which has been revealed in the Vedas. In this connection Al-Biruni

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1. See p. 218-219.
2. Mit. on Yāj, II. 1-
3. Idrisi, p, 39,
4. C. Sarkar Sastry, *Hindu Law*, VIII, Ed. p. 57,
5. S.N. Sen, *Essay on Hindu Jurisprudence*, p. 12.
6. Kane, *HDS*, Vol. I, pp. 1-3; Vol. III, p. 244 ff.
7. *Jaimini*, I, 1-2.
8. *Rāja Dharma*, 1941, p. 80.

observes, that law and religion among the Greeks was founded by their sages and such was also the case with the Hindus. "For they believe that their religious law and its single precepts derive their origin from Rishis, their sages, the pillars of their religion, and not from the prophet, i.e. Narayana who, when coming into this world, appears in some human figure ......Further, no law can be exchanged or replaced by another, for they use the laws simply as they find them."[1] Now as we all know that the sources of Hindu Law are : (1) the Śrutis or the Vedas, (2) the Smṛtis or Dharma Śāstras, (3) Sadācāras, the established usage of goodmen, (4) Ātma-tuṣṭi or self-satisfaction, and (5) the Purāṇas. Of these the primary or the principal source is the Vedas and its authority is based on direct revelation, while the authority of the Smṛtis is derivative. And we also know that all these derive their origin from Rishis and Sages.[2] It is also evident that legal rules as well as moral and religious precepts are included in the broader conception of 'Dharma'.[3] The Taittirīya Śruti has rightly declared that 'it is the support of the entire world'.[4] Thus, like all ancient systems of law, Hindu Law was believed to have had a divine origin.[5]

According to the Hindu sages there are four indices by reference to which Dharma or approved conduct may be ascertained. Manu declares, "The Veda, the sacred tradition, the customs of virtuous men, and one's own pleasure, they declare to be visibly the fourfold means of defining the sacred Law."[6] Gautama Dharmasūtra says the same thing.[7] As regards the Purāṇas as source of Dharma, Dr. Altekar points out that they have been mentioned, though only recently, as a source of Dharma.[1] Al-Biruni was aware of the fact that the eighteen Purāṇas were regarded by the Hindus as sacred works.[2] P.N. Sen opines that the word 'Dharma' used by Manu and others no doubt covers a wider field than positive law, but the latter, according to the Hindu conception, "has no existence apart from the former, for positive law is but a portion of the sacred law which by reason of its peculiar character and exigencies of the community, is enforced by the king."[3] We need not discuss at length the four indices enumerated above which have been regarded as sources of positive law.

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[1] Al-Biruni, I, pp. 106-7.

[2] *Yājñavalkya* mentions the names of the sages who propounded the Dharma Śāstras (I, 4-5).

[3] Sen, *Hindu Jurisprudence*, p. 24.

[4] *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, quoted by Sen, p. 24.

[5] S. Vardachariar, *Hindu Judicial System*, p. 32.

[6] *Manu*, II, 12; Cf. *Yāj*. I, 7.

[7] *Gaut*. I, 1-2.

The expression 'sources of Hindu Law' is not altogether free from ambiguity and has been used in a confusing variety of senses. In India from the very early times the law (Vyavahāra) was an integral part of religion and ethics (Dharma). Therefore, the law books (Dharmaśāstras); as Jolly remarks, offer us overwhelming data about our every day life and contain matters relating to religious purification and penance, prayer and sacrifices, prohibition about food and drink, punishment in hell and rebirth, philosophy, eschatology, creation, funeral ceremonies and sacrifices to the dead, the study of the Vedas, and ascaticism, the manners of living and the customs of Brāhmaṇas and kings and other things which we do not generally expect in a law book.[4]

While writing about the sources of law Al-Biruni remarks that no law could be exchanged or replaced by another. It was due to its divine nature and was accepted as God's law. The divine origin of law sacured stability and force, which it would have not otherwise possessed. "It restrained the action of those in authority and in unchangeableness conduced to social order during stages in which strong restraints were most needed."[5]

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1. Altekar, *Sources of Hindu Dharma*, p. 3.
2. Al-*Biruni*, I, p. 103.
3. Sen, op.cit., p. 10.
4. Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*. p. 1.
5. S. Vardachariar, *The Hindu Judicial System*, p. 37.

The Judges

Though in ancient Hindu theory, the temporal sovereign was not the source of law, it was one of his chief duties to enforce the observance of Laws among the four castes. The king was regarded as the fountain of justice.[1] At the apex was the king or his deputy, later known as Prāḍvivāka.[2] A learned Brāhmaṇa exercised jurisdiction co-ordinate with the king.[3] The administration of justice was thus mainly in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas. In this connection Sulayman obsorves that, like the Chinese, the Indians had judges who decided in causes between subject and subject.[4] Masudi also mentions Kazis besides Wazirs,[5] whose main function was to look into the disputed matters and give judgments according to the laws of the time. Al-Biruni only mentions judge.[6] Marvazi[7] records that the king of Qimar has saveral judges who tried cases between men. There is no clear account relating to the caste and manner of appointments of judges. It seems that the normal existing procedure was adopted in this matter.[8] Generally, learned Brāhmaṇas were appointed as judges and in no case could a Śūdra be appointed as the expounder of Dharma.[9] The judges tried the cases regularly in accordance with religion and without bias,[10] otherwise they were liable to be punished.[11]

Procedure

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There were established principles according to which cases were decided. The suitor was required to produce a written document justifying his claims against the other party. The document was to be in clear writing and the judge demanded in the document 'the well-established proof of the justice of his suit, in the absence of which the suit was settled by means of witnesses without a written document.'[1] Hindu Law texts lay down certain caracteristics of a proper complaint, viz. that the declaration of the complaint should be significant, technically precise, comprehensive, unwavering, quite uneqivocal conformable to the original complaint, not opposite to well-known facts, consistent, clear, susceptible of proof, concise and yet not deficient in meaning and consistent with local and temporal conditions. An improper and false complaint was liable to rejection. The representation, as made by the plaintiff, was to be put in writing, mentioning the year, month, half-month, day, names of parties, valuation and cost etc. The statement of the plaintiff was written down accurately in the presence of the defendant when the latter was called before the court.[2]

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[1] *Manu.*, VIII, 1,-3; *Yāj*, *I.* 360, II.1.
[2] *Bṛhaspati*, I. 12.
[3] *Gautama*, VIII. 1.
[4] Sulayman, p. 35.
[5] Elliot, I. 1, p. 20.
[6] Al-Biruni, II, p. 158.
[7] Marvazi, p. 51.
[8] Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 271-272.
[9] *Manu.*, VIII, 9, 20; *Yāj.*, II. 3; *Kat.*, 67; *Śukra*, IV, 5-14.
[10] Marvazi, p. 51.
[11] Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 385-386.

Witnesses

The trial was mainly based upon the deposition of witnesses and its purpose was 'to ascertain the truth'. The minimum number of witnesses according to Al-Biruni must not be less than four but there may be more.[3] In the law-books, however, the minimum number of witnesses has usually been put at three.[4] According to Bṛhaspati there may be nine, seven, five, four or three witnesses or even two witnesses are sufficient if they are learned Brāhmaṇas.[5] It seems that during the time of Al-Biruni, at least four witnesses were required. Possibly he has taken the number four or more from Bṛhaspati. Bṛhaspati and Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra are of opinion that no notice shall be taken of a single witness for deciding a matter.[6] But Al-Biruni

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 158.
2. *Kant*, III, 1; *Mit.* of *Yāj.*, II, 6; *Aparārk*, p. 608
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 158.
4. *Gaut.*, XIII, 2; *Manu.*, VIII. 60; *Yāj.*, II, 69; *Nārada*, IV, 153.
5. *Bṛhaspati* quoted by *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, 76.
6. *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 301, V. 16); *Viṣṇu Dh. S.*, VIII. 5.; Cf Kane, *HDS*, III, In. 484, p. 331.

observes, "only in case the justice of the deposition of a witness is perfectly established and certain before the judge, he may admit it, and decide the question alone on the basis of the deposition this sole witness."[1] Al-Biruni's statement is confirmed by the provision in Manu, Yājña-valkya, Vyāsa and Kautilya who are of opioion that one man alone may be a witness.[2] Though in other details their views are not identified with Al-Biruni's. The deposition of messanger, accountant, king or chief judge may be valid, even if he is the only witness.[3] It is thus clear that in general no notice was taken of a single witness. A single witness could be accepted if he was an exceptionally reliable man, a regular performer of his religious duties, or his actions were pure or if he knew the Dharma and his truthfulness had been well attested before or if he was a manufacturer of an article or, in case where the transaction in question was effected in secret or, when the case had been decided by the king or chief judge.[4] In this connection Al-Biruni further remarks, "However, he (judge) does not admit praying about in secret, deriving argument from mere signs or indications in public, concluding by analogy from one thing which seems established about another and using all sorts of tricks to elicit the truth, as Iyas Ibn Muawiya used to do."[5] Al-Biruni makes no mention of the kinds of witnesses, though such classification is found in the Smṛtis. Nārada divides them into two classes, namely, a witness appointed and a witness unappointed. An appointed witness is one who is nominated to give testimony, an unappointed witness is one not so appointed.[6] The minor division of these two classes of witness need not be referred to here. Reliable witnesses generally possessed the following qualities. They were 'religious, generous, of respectable family, addicted to veracity, lovers of virtue, candid, having offspring, wealthy conformer to traditional and written law and in number three'.[1]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 158.

[2] *Manu*, VIII, 77; *Yāj.* II, 72; *Vyāsa* in *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 76; Kaut, III, 11.

[3] Kane, *HDS*, Vol. III, p. 332.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 158. Iyas Ibn Muawiya was judge in Basra under the Omayya Khalif Omar Ibn Abdalaziz, and died there in A.H. 122 = A. D. 740.

[6] *Nārada*, IV.149.

Al-Biruni does not enlighten us on what was to be done when there were many witnesses and who differed in their statements. There are certain rules laid down by the Smṛtis. "The statement of the majority of witnesses should be accepted but if they are equally divided then the statement of those who are more pure (in character or more disinterested) should be accepted and if the meritorious are divided equally then those who are the best among them should be accepted as true."[2]

When the suitor was not able to prove his claim, the defendant wes required to swear. But the latter had the right to tender the oath to the suitor by saying, "Swear thou that thy claim is true and I will give you thee what thou claimest."[3]

The Muslims of India under Hindu rule were permitted to follow their own laws in the settlement of disputes and in this non-Muslim witnesses were not accepted. In this connection Ibn Hauqal remarks, "In all these cities (ruled over by infidel kings) the Muslims, however, few they are, will not tolerate the exercise of authority, nor the imposition of punishment, nor the testimony of a witness except by Muslims. But in some parts I have seen Muslim seeking witness among non-Muslims who have reputation for honesty and the other party refuses to accept the witness, and Muslim takes his place and so the decision will be reached."[4]

Oaths and Ordeals

If in some complicated cases judges could not arrive at any decision by the failure of witnesses, they adopted certain extraordinary means to get at the truth. These extraordinary means are known as Śapatha (Oaths and Ordeals). Later authorities, such as Nārada or Yājñavalkya classify evidence into two broad categories namely, (a) human proof, consisting of proof by means of documents and witnesses and circumstantial evidence, or by documents, witnesses and possession, or merely by documents and witnesses. (b) Divine intervention, by means of oaths and ordeals. Yājñavalkya holds that, as a rule, proof by ordeal is resorted to only in default of worldly proof.[1] Nārada opines that if no witness be forthcoming the case is tested by ordeals and oaths.[2] Bṛhaspati provides that the shifting burden of proof at each stage helps the order of examining witnesses on oath.[3] Oaths and ordeals are called the divine judgment (divya, daivikī kriyā, samaya kriyā or daiva).[4] Ordeals or Divya is defined as "that which decides a matter (in dispute) not determined by human means of proof,"[5] or is not to be decided by human means of proof. Early Muslim writers mention various kinds of ordeals which were administered to find out the truth. On the subject of ordeals Al-Biruni is more elaborate. There are many kinds of the oath, in accordance of the value of the object of the claim. If the object is of no great importance, and the suitor agrees that the accused person shall swear, the latter simply swears before five learned Brāhmaṇas in the following words : "If I lie, he shall have as recompense as much of my goods as is equal to the eightfold of the amount of his claim."[6] It indicates that when a case was not decided by witnesses, the judge employed oaths and ordeals. Manu says that when there are not witnesses, the truth would have to be found out by an oath.[1] Bṛhaspati also says that where documents or witnesses do not help in finding out the truth, or where inferences from circumstantial evidence also is confusing, then the matter is to be decided by divine proof.[2] The Vivādacandra quoted Nārada and holds that the judges should decide the dispute between litigants by means of ordeals and various Śapatha, in default of witnesses.[3] Thus ordeals were to be employed if no human proof was available.

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[1] Quoted by Sen, *Hindu Jurisprudence*, pp. 370-371.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, III, 347.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 158.

[4] Nainar, pp. 163-164.

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[1] *Yāj.*, II, 22.

[2] *Nārada*, I, 247.

[3] *Bṛhaspati*, VI. 3.

[4] Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 363.

[5] *Vyavahāra Mayūkha; Divyatattva*, p. 574; Cf. Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 363.

[6] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 158-9.

Distinction Between Oath and Ordeal

By not making distinction between oath and ordeals Al-Biruni follows Manu and Nārada. Manu holds that truth should be found out by Śapatha, when not achieved by witnesses.[4] Vyāsa employes the word Śapatha for both terms.[5] Bṛhaspati also uses the word 'divya' for both oath and ordeal.[6] But some are of opinion that these terms connote different meanings.[7] Vyavahāra Prakāśa and the Mit. on Yāj. for instance, say that ordeals are those that generally end in immediate decision of the dispute, while Śapathas take time for decision.[8] The Mit. on Yāj. adds that both special oaths and ordeals are divine proof (divya-pramāṇa).[9] According to Jolly the difference between the two is one of degree and not of quality. In simpler cases only oath was to be taken but in serious and important cases the ordeal was resorted to.[10] It seems that during the time of Al-Biruni no distinction was made between Śapathas and ordeals, or in disputes of small value Śapathas

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1. *Manu*, VIII. 109; Cf. *Gaut.* XIII, 12-13; VI, IX, 2-9.
According to *Medh.* Śapatha, 'Oath', is used for the whole *daiva anumāna*, 'divine proof', and thus includes the ordeals.
2. *Bṛhaspati in Vyavahāra Prakāśa*, p 169.
3. Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 363; Cf *Nārada*, II, 29, IV. 239.
4. *Manu*, VIII, 109-114.
5. *Vyās* quoted in *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 96.
6. *Bṛhaspati* quoted in *Vyavahāramātrikā*, p. 333.
7. *Nārada*, IV, 247, quoted in *Vivādacandra*, p. 112.
8. *Vyavahāraprakāśa*, p. 170.
9. *Mit. on Yāj.*, II, 97.
10. Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 312.

(oaths) were generally employed, while ordeals were resorted to only in serious disputes or crimes.

Number of Divyas

Al-Biruni mentions only six kinds of ordeals according to their applicability to respective suits. These are: (1) ordeal of poison (Viṣa), (2) ordeal of water (Salila), (3) ordeal of Kośa, (4) ordeal of Balance (Tulā or dhaṭa), (5) ordeal of Taptamāṣa (hot-gold piece), and (6) ordeal of fire (Agni).[1] In the Dharmaśāstras, however, there are nine ordeals, which are as follows (1) ordeal of Balance, (2) ordeal of fire, (3) ordeal of water, (4) ordeal of poison, (5) ordeal of kośa (Sacred libation) (6) ordeal of rice (taṇḍula), (7) ordeal of hot-gold piece, (8) ordeal of plough-share (phāla), and (9) ordeal of lot (dharmādharma). The difference between Al-Biruni's six and the nine provided by Dharmaśāstras may be partly attributed to the fact what we do not get a unanimous opinion among the writers on law. It might also be possible that during the time of Al-Biruni only six ordeals, which are mentioned by him, were in use. It may, however, be noted that Al-Biruni's ordeals are not taken from actual observation but most probably from law books. Since the ancient authorities themselves differ as to the exact number of ordeals, Al-Biruni might have accepted that number which was more familiar to the people of his time. Śaṅkha-Likhita names four ordeals, viz. those of balance, poison, water and holding red-hot iron.[2] Manu mentions only two, viz. the holding of fire (i.e. red-hot iron) in the hand, or plunging in the water.[3] But Nārada says that Manu has declared five kinds of ordeals.[4] Yājñavalkya and Viṣṇu Dharma Sūtra mentions five, viz. balance, fire, water, poison and kośa (consecrated water)[5]

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1. Al-Biruni, II, pp. 159-160.
2. *Śaṅkha-Likhita* quoted in *Parāśara Mādhavīya*, III, p. 151; Cf. *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 96, *Aparārka*, p. 694.
3. *Manu*, VIII, 114.
4. *Nārada*, IV. 251 F.
5. *Yāj.*, II, 95; *Viṣṇu, Dh.S.*, IX-XIV; *Nārada*, IV, 252.

to which Nārada adds two more, viz. taptamāṣa and taṇḍula.[1] Bṛhaspati and Pitāmaha speak of nine.[2] C.V. Vaidya doubts the applicability of these ordeals : "For it has always been a mystery as to how any party could consent to perform such ordeals as are described, since the man performing the ordeals is always sure to be defeated as nature must have her course whether the party performing the ordeals was right or wrong unless some trick was resorted to."[3] Whatever the explanation, ordeals prescribed in Hindu Law books, and apparently they were resorted to in the period c. 1000-1200 A.D. were also evidenced by Al-Biruni. Vardachariar is, however, of opinion that the Hindu method of ordeals might have been right or wrong, "but they were certainly the result of an anxiety to discover the truth." He justifies the practice of oaths (śapatha) and of resort to ordeals in an age "when the possibility of divine intervention was more widely and sincerely believed in." He further says that the prescription of ordeals by the Hindu Law books undoubtedly has relations to the psychological factor.[4] People had great belief in the correctness of the divine judgement.

Ordeal of Poison (Visa)

Only Al-Biruni mentions this ordeal. It was a higher form of ordeal than the taking of oath before five learned Brāhmaṇas. In the ordeal of poison a certain quality of poison[5] has to be takan and for sometime it is watched whether the poison begins to act or not. Writing about it, Al-Biruni says, "The accused person is invited to drink the bish (Viṣa ?) called Brāhmaṇa (?). It is one of the worst kinds, but if he speaks

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1. *Nārada*, IV.343, IV.337.
2. *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 315), vv. 4-5; *Aparārka*, pp. 628, 694 respectively.
3. C.V. Vaidya, *HMHI*, III, p. 467.
4. S. Vardachariar, *The Hindu Judicial System*, pp. 163-164; Cf. Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 375-378.
5. For the quantity of poison and time to be administered see Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 372-373.

the truth the drink does not do him any harm."[1] Kane suggests that he is probably referring to poison being called the offspring of Brahma in Yājñavalkya and Nārada.[2]

Ordeal of Water (Salil)

The ordeal of water as described by some writers is rather confusing. Though the Smṛti Candrikā remarks that the ordeals of water and poison had gone out of vogue (in its days),[3] it seems that in some form it was practised during the early medieval period. In this ordeal the man dives into a lake or river and he must keep himself under water until an arrow, which is shot away at the same time is brought back by a fast runner.[4] In this connection Al-Biruni writes that the accused was brought to a deep and rapidly flowing river or to a deep well with much water. Then the man addressed the water thus : 'Since thou belongest to the purest angels, and knowest both what is secret and public, kill me if I lie, and preserve me if I speak the truth.'[5] Thereafter five men took him and threw him into the water. It was generally believed that if he had spoken the truth he would not drown and die.[6]

Sulayman gives the other method of ordeal of water (scalding water). According to him sometimes people boiled water in an iron or copper pot until it was so hot that no one could approach it. Then they threw an iron ring into it. The accused was asked to thrust his hand down and bring out the ring. With surprise he writes, "A saw one who did this and received no manner of hurt. The accusor in this case was

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1. Al-Biruni, II, p. 159.
2. Kane, *HDS*, III, fn. 591, p. 376; Cf. *Yāj*., II.110. *Nār*, IV.325.
3. *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 116.
4. Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 371-372.
5. Cf. The Śodhya should invoke the water with the mantra, 'O Varuṇa ! Save me by means of truth' (*Yāj*. II, 108). Several Smṛtis give different mantras to be recited by the judge in invoking the water. (Kane, *HDS*, III, fn. 589, p. 372.)
6. Al-Biruni, II. p. 159.

asked to pay a man of gold."[1] The Tuhfatu-l Kiram records the ordeal of water as follows. A stout post was fixed in deep water, the accused was then told to dive to the bottom, and stay by the post. One of the company shot an arrow to a long distance, and another person went and brought the arrow back. The post was then shaken, if the accused was innocent, he would, up to that time, by holding his breath, had been able to remain at the bottom, and on this signal he will come up to the surface. But if guilty, he could not any how stay so long under water.[2]

Ordeal of Kosa (The Sacred libation)

In this ordeal an image of a deity is bathed in water and the accused is given that water to drink. If within a short period–three weeks at the most–any misfortune befalls him or his nearest relation, it will be taken as a proof of his guilt. Al-Biruni has mentioned the ordeal of koṣa. According to him, the next higher ordeal was that the judge sent both the claimant and the defendant to the temple of the most venerated idol of the town or realm. There the defendant had to fast during that day. On the following day he was dressed in new garments, and posted himself together with the claimant in that temple. Then the priest poured water over the idol and gave it to him to drink. If he had not spoken the truth he at once vomited blood.[3]

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[1] Sulayman, p. 31. No information is given about the person to whom the money is paid. Probably Sulayman is referring to the ordeal of *Taptamūṣa* (of hot-gold piece), in which instead of water, butter or oil was used. See the ordeal of *Taptamāṣa* mentioned by Al-Biruni.

[2] *Tuhfatu-l-Kiram*, Elliot, I, p. 330. "Under the government of the Mirs of Sind", Hughes informs us, "trials by ordeals, expecially those of fire and water, were frequently resorted to in cases where the accused person declared his innocence or where there was no direct proof forthcoming. The ordeal of water mentioned in the Tuhfatu-l-Kiram is described in almost the same terms by Lieut. James, when he was Deputy Collector of Sikarpur" about 1850 (*Gazetteer*, p. 48) Captain Wood also has a word-picture of a similar trial which he witnessed at Mithan Kote in 1836 (*Journey*, pp. 45-6).

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 159.

Al-Biruni's description of the ordeals is, on the whole, supported by other sources. In one respect it differs from the account given in the law-books. According to him, the results of all the ordeals are declared immediately, whereas in the Smṛtis the results of the ordeals of Koṣa take time, which are more or less 'according to the value of the claim or the gravity of the offence.' According to Yājñavalkya, Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra and Nārada; within fourteen days the result should come out of the ordeal of koṣa in the form of no serious calamity, illness and death on the accused or on his son or wife or other near ralatives, then he is to be declared innocent.[1] It seems that Al-Biruni was either misinformed or the people believed in his time that the result of the Koṣa ordeal followed immediately the performance.

Ordeal of Balance (Dhata or Tula)

The person performing the ordeal is twice weighted on a scale; if at the sacond time he appears to be lighter than before, he is considered to be innocent; if he is heavier, he is guilty. How it is to be construed if the weight remains the same or the balance is broken into two is not clear.

According to Al-Biruni, a still higher kind was the following : The defendant was placed on the scale of a balance and was weighed; after that he was taken off the scale, and the scale was left as it was. Then he invoked as witnesses for the truth of his deposition the spritual beings, the angels, the heavenly beings, one after the other,[2] and all which he spoke wrote down on a piece of paper and fastened that to his head. He was placed for the second time on the balance. If he had spoken the truth, he would now weigh more.[3]

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[1] Yāj., II, 113; *Viṣṇu Dh.S.*, XIV.4-5; *Nārada*, IV.330.

[2] Probably Al-Biruni refers to the invocation as stated by Yāj. "O balance you are the abode of truth, you were created by the gods for this purpose, declare the truth, free me from this (cloud of) suspicion. Mother ! if I am a sinner, then, take me lower, if I am pure take me upwards." (Yāj. II. 101-102).

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 159.

According to Al-Biruni, after weighing the defendant first invoked as witness for the truth of his deposition, the spiritual beings, the angels, the heavenly beings. But the difference is this that instead of the invocation of spiritual beings the balance itself was to be invoked.[1] Although the procedure given by Al-Biruni is substantially correct; he is mistaken in saying that if the man had spoken the truth he weighed more than before. According to the writers on ordeals of balance, if the person went up (i.e. he was found lighter), he was declared innocent and if he weighed the same or went down (i.e. weighed more) he was guilty.[2] Al-Biruni's statement on the result of this ordeal is just the opposite of what the Smṛtis say. He does not say how the result was to be declared in case the weight of the accused remained the same. In this connection Bṛhaspati recommends that he who weighs the same should be weighed once more. If the pans or the beams or the hooks break or the ropes give way owing to some visible cause then the procedure was to be repeated, but if the breaking is due to an unseen cause or accident, the person was to be declared guilty.[3]

Ordeal of Taptamasa (Of Hot Gold-piece)

In it a golden coin was to be taken out of a vessel full of boiling fluid, such as butter or oil by the accused; if in doing this, the hand of the accused person was not injured he was considered innocent. According to Al-Biruni, the next in order of degree was the ordeal of Taptamāṣa. The people took butter and sesame oil in equl quantities and boiled them in a kettle. Then they threw a leaf into it, which, by getting flaccid and burned, was to them a sign of boiling. When the boiling was at its height, they threw a piece of gold into the kettle and ordened the defendant to fetch it out with his hand. If he had spoken the truth, he

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1. Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 370.
2. *Com. on Nārada*, IV. 283; *V. Mayūkha*, p. 60; *Dīpakalikā on Yāj*, II, 102.
3. *Bṛhaspati*, (SBE, Vol. 33, p. 317, V. 19).

fetched it out and was declared innocent.[1] Maqdisi also mentions it. According to him one sect of Indians resorted to it. They boiled oil in some iron vessel and put a piece of iron in it and asked the accused to take it out. If he was false, his hand was burnt in taking it out, if he was truthful, his hand did not burn.[2] In describing this ordeal Al-Biruni and Maqdisi do not mention either the size of the vessel which was to be sixteen aṅgulas in diameter and four aṅgulas deep or the quantity of butter and oil, which were to be twenty palas in weight. The golden piece weighed one masaka.[3] They also do not mention the invocation accompanying this procedure. There is a mantra, which the judge was to invoke, 'O ghee ! thou art the holiest thing in sacrifices, thou art nectar; burn him (the Śodhya) if he is a sinner; be cool as ice if he be innocant.'[4]

Ordeal of Licking Hot Iron (of Phala—Plough Share) ?

This kind of ordeal is only mentioned by Mutahhar bin Tahir Maqdisi. The description of the procedure is similar to the method of ordeal by phala as described by Bṛhaspati. A plough share of iron weighing twelve palas, eight aṅgulas long and four aṅgula broad was made red-hot and the accused (thief) was asked to lick it once with his tongue. If he was not burnt he was declared innocent, otherwise, he was found guilty.[5] In this connection Maqdisi writes, "We have learnt that Indians when take oath or evidence in trials they make a piece of iron very hot and when it is so and becomes red, then the accused is asked to lick it. They think that if he is untrue and false, then his tongue is burnt. But if he is true, no harm comes to him."[6]

Ordeal of Fire (Agni)

According to Al-Biruni, it was the highest kind of ordeal.

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 260,

[2] Maqdisi, IV, p. 11.

[3] Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 374.

[4] Ibid, p. 375.

[5] *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 318), V. 28.

[6] Maqdisi, op.cit., p. 10.

It has been described by writers almost in an identical manner. The Hindu texts describe the ordeal as follows : A glowing iron ball had to be carried to a certain distance, the accused, however, in order to protect his hand from being burnt, could at first cover it with a layer of leaves. He was not considered guilty if his hand was not burnt. If he let the ball come down too early, or if it was doubtful whether he had been burnt or not, the trial was to be repeated.

According to Al-Biruni, people made a piece of iron so hot that it was near melting and put it with a pair of tongs on the hands of the defendant, there being between his hand and the iron save a broad leaf of some plant, and under the same, some few and scattered corns of rice in the husks. They ordered him to carry it seven paces and then he might throw it to the ground and was declared to be innocent.[1]

The description of the ordeal of fire by Sulayman is as follows : In India when a man was accused of a crime punishable with death, he was asked to go through the trial by fire, and if he answered in the affirmative, then a piece of iron was made red hot. Then spreading the hand of the accused people put seven leaves of a special tree on the (stretched) hand and placed the hot iron on it. And in that condition he walked backwards and forwards for some time and then threw off the iron. Immediately after that, they put his hand into a leather bag. The hand of the accused was thrust in it and sealed with the signet of the king. And if at the end of three days he appeared and declared that he had suffered no hurt, they ordered him to take out his hand and was given raw paddy and was asked to remove the husk with his hand. When if no sign of fire was seen, they declared him innocent and instead of putting him to death the accusor was fined one mam (equal to two raths) of gold and the king took this fine.[2] According to descriptions of Ibn Rusta and Marvazi, the ordeal of fire was prevalent in the cities of Maharaja (Java) and in the city of Sind named Fansur (not identified). The Maharaja's people swore by the fire; when two of them had a dispute before the Sultan, a piece of iron weighing a ratl was taken and heated in the fire until sparks flew from it. Then leaves of a local tree resembling the laurel were taken, and placed on the palm of the defendant's hand. Then the heated iron was taken with tongs and placed on the leaves and the man was asked to walk seven times a distance of 100 steps backwards and forwards. If the leaves and the palm of his hand were completely burnt, his crime was proved; and he was punishable with death and was killed; if crime was punishable with a fine, a well-to-do man was fined with (the loss of) his property. If he was unable to pay the fine he became the slave of the king who could sell him. Ibn Rusta adds that if the fire did not burn the accused the accusor was held guilty of the charge he had made.[1] Al-Biruni's description generally agrees with that given in the law-books. He says that the accused was asked to carry the hot iron piece seven paces, but in the law-books the description is somewhat different. According to them, in the names of Agni, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Yama, Indra, Kubera, Soma, Savitṛ and all gods, nine circles with cow-dung were drawn. Each circle was to be sixteen aṅgulas and in each Kuśa grass was to be spread and the accused was asked to plant his feet on them. Then holding in both his hands the red-hot piece the accused walked slowly from the first to eight circles. Having reached the 8th circle, he should throw the red-hot iron piece on to the 9th circle. Then the judge rubbed rice grains on the hands of the Śodhya, and if the accused showed no hesitation and injury on his hand at the end of day, he was declared innocent.[2] According to Kātyāyana and Yājñavalkya, if the red-hot piece falls earlier orif he loses his footing or is burnt elsewhere than on the hands he should again undergo the ordeal. This is not mentioned by Al-Biruni. It seems that during the time of Al-Biruni there was some change in the procedure of this ordeal. The method, as described by him, is nearly similar to that given in the Tuhfatu-l Kiram, which says that the ordeal practised among the most ignorant was that of taking up a red-hot spade. Green leaves of a tree were tied on to the hand of the suspected person with raw thread, and an iron spade, heated to redness, was then placed on his palm. He had to carry it for several paces quickly. "And it has often been seen that neither the thread nor the leaves have been in the slightest degree affected by the heat of the red hot iron, although when cast to the ground it scorched it like the sand in the oven of a parcher of grain. Verily this is by the virtue of truth, for if otherwise, how is it that such fire does not burn the hand ?"[1]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 160.

[2] Sulayman, p. 30.

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[1] Ibn Rusta, p. 138, Nainar, p. 110; Marvazi, p. 51; Ibn Rusta mentions seven and Marvazi nine leaves which were placed on the palm. With holding the hot iron, walking seven times is also not mentioned by Ibn Rusta. Walking hundred steps are not specified by Sulayman. Al-Biruni mentions only seven paces.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 370-371.

The Tuhfatu-l Kiram mentions another Sindian ordeal of fire. When a person was suspected of any grave offence, and desired to purge himself of the charge, he offered to pass through the flames of a large fire, "like a salamander, and come out of it unharmed like Khalil."[2] Hsuan Tsang has mentioned four kinds of ordeals. They are ordeals of water, fire, weight and poison. In the water ordeal the accused was put in one sack and a stone in another, and then the two sacks were connected and thrown into a deep stream. If the sack containing the stone floated, and the other sank, the man's guilt was proved. The fire ordeal required the accused to kneel and tread on hot iron, to take it in his hand and lick it; if he was innocent, he was not hurt; if he was burnt, he was guilty. In the weighing ordeal the accused was weighed against a stone, and if the latter was lighter, the charge was false; if otherwise, it was true. The poison ordeal required that the right hind leg of a ram be cut off, and according to the portion assigned to the accused to eat, poisons were put into the leg; and if the man was innocent he survived; and if not, the poison took effect.[1] It may be noticed that these descriptions of the four ordeals do not agree in several respects with the descriptions in Al-Biruni and in the Smṛtis and digests. The poison ordeal in water has nothing in common with poison ordeal of the Smṛtis.[2] Al-Biruni's descriptions of ordeals are more reliable and accurate.

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[1] *Tuhfatu-l-Kiram* (Elliot, I), pp. 329–330.

[2] Ibid, p. 329.

Law of Punishment

According to Al-Biruni, the manners and customs of the Hindus resemble those of the Christians, both being based upon the principle of virtue. But since the people of the world are ignorant and erring, they can be brought on the right path by the use of force. In fact, no government is possible in the absence of a proper machinery for the punishment of the wicked and the maintenance of order.[3] Al-Biruni's view comes very near the Hindu concept of Daṇḍa (power of punishment). According to Hindu works Daṇḍa was created by the creator for the sake of the king. It was incumbent on the king to use Daṇḍa properly for punishing those who were guilty, otherwise the strong would torment the weak. Kautilya clearly says that if Daṇḍa be not employed, it gives rise to the condition of matsyanyāya, since in the absence of a chastiser the strong devour the weak.[4] Other works also recognise the importance of Daṇḍa and say that where there is no fear of punishment, the condition of matsyanyāya follows.[5] Manu clearly declares, "Punishment governs all mankind; punishment alone preserves them, punishment wakes while their guards are asleep; the wise consider punishment as the protection of justice."[6] Several works contain eulogies of Daṇḍa; the king has been called Daṇḍadhara. The conception of Daṇḍa is therefore that "the state's will and coercive power keep the individual and nation within the bounds of Dharma, punish for breaches and effect the good of the whole."[1] Daṇḍa should be used properly. It should not be either too severe or too mild but should be appropriate to the fault committed.[2]

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[1] Watters, I, p. 172; Cf. Beal, I, p. 84.

[2] Kane, *HDS*, Vol. III, *fn*. 591, p. 376.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 161.

[4] *Kaut.*, I, 4.

[5] *Rāmāyaṇa*, II, Ch. 67; *Śāntiparva*, 15.30, 67, 16; *Kāmandaka*, II.40; *Mātsyapurāṇa*, 225.9; *Mānasollāsa*, II.2, V.1295 etc.

[6] *Manu.*, VII.18.

Al-Biruni goes on to say that originally the affairs of government were in the hands of the Brāhmaṇas, but the country became disorganized, because they ruled according to the philosophic principles of their religious codes. It even proved a hindrance to the administration of their religious affairs. Therefore they entrusted the Kṣatriyas exclusively with the duties of 'ruling and fighting'. Under the new arrangement the penal code began to be administered under the control of the kings. The Brāhmaṇas as a class lived by asking and begging but they remained apart from the ordinary run of the punishment applicable in other cases.[3] Al-Biruni's statement clearly indicates that in general the affairs of government were in the hands of the Kṣatriyas.

Law of Theft

Theft (Steya) : This term is used in a very wide sense to mean every offence against property which arises out of avarice and is done by fraud and deceit. Kātyāyana defines it as 'depriving a man of his wealth either clandestinely or openly and either by night or by day.'[4] Nārada defines as 'deprivation of wealth by various means from people that are asleep, careless or intoxicated.'[5] The word theft (steya) in its primary stricter sense signifies, "taking away the property of another without his consent not by the use of force but of deceit."[6] According to the value of the article stolen it may be of three classes viz. (i) paltry theft (kṣudra), (ii) theft of ordinary magnitude (maddhya) and (iii) theft of the precious thing (uttama).[1] Thieves are either open or patent (Prakāśa) or secret (aprakāśa).[2]

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[1] Kane, *HDS*, III, p. 22.

[2] *Kaut.*, I.4; *Kāmandaka*, II.37; *Manu*, VII.16, *Śāntiparva*, 15.1 *ff.*; 56, 21; 103.34 etc.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, pp. 161-162.

[4] *Kātyāyna*, 810, quoted by *Dāyabhāga*, VI.9, p. 224.

[5] *Nārada*, XVII.17.

[6] Sen, *Hindu Jurisprudence*, p. 335.

The gradation of punishment according to the value of the stolen property and the three grades of theft were known to Al-Biruni. "The law of theft directs that the punishment of the thief should be in accordance with the value of the stolen object. Accordingly sometimes a punishment of extreme or of middling severity is necessary, sometimes a course of correction and imposing a payment, sometimes only exposing to public shame and ridicule. If the object is very great, the kings blind a Brāhmaṇa and mutilate him cutting of his left hand and right foot, or the right hand and left foot, whilst they mutilate a Kṣatriya without blinding him, and kill thieves of the other castes."[3] Al-Biruni clearly divides theft into three classes according to the value of stolen property as stated above. As regards the punishments for theft in general, they were heavy in all cases of serious crime. The accused was sentenced to death, was impaled, hanged or drowned and often his hands were hacked off and other tortures inflicted to aggravate the punishment. Secret theft was theft proper. The punishment for the latter was very severe, namely, impaling and immolation.[4] Theft proper was treated very severely, the higher the caste, the severer the punishment for serious offences.[5]

The punishment for theft prescribed by Al-Biruni for the four castes is related to the social status of criminals and generally follows the law-books. Sulayman writes that theft, whether considerable or inconsiderable was always punished with death both in China and India. In India, especially, if a man was found guilty of theft, a long piece of wood was

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1. *Nārada*, XVII.13–16; *Yāj.*, II.275.
2. *Manu*, **IX**.256; *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 359), V. 2; *Cf.* *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 318; *Vyavahāra Prakāśa*, p. 387.
3. Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.
4. *Bṛhaspati*, XXII.17; *Manu* XXII,18.
5. See Ch. *Position of Hindu Caste.*

taken, sharpened to a point and "applied to his fundament and thrust up until it came out of his neck."[1] Idrisi states that all Indian and Chinese punished thief by execution, and restored the trust (to the owner).[2] Shahriyar informs us that theft among the Indians was considered a serious offence. If the thief was of Indian descent and was some poor wretch without fortune, then the king condemned him to death. If, on the other hand, he was a person of substance, the king took away all that he had or imposed heavy fine. In general death was the penalty for theft among them.[3] He further writes that he was informed that a young Indian was apprehended for theft or for some other crime, and the king had ordered that he should be flayed alive.[4] Death punishment for theft is also recorded by Ibn Battuta. He says that people were put to death for stealing a single nut.[5] Gautam and Manu prescribe that a Vaiśya, a Kṣatriya and a Brāhmaṇa should respectively be fined twice, four times and eight times of the fine to be imposed upon a Śūdra for theft.[6] Mutilation was generally prescribed as punishment for theft.[7] Śukra provides death punishment for thefts of costly jewels.[8] Manu prescribes death sentence for kidnapping men of good families, particulary women, and for thefts of costly jewels.[9] While people of other castes were awarded death punishment for theft and murder, the Āpastamba Dharmsūtra provides that a Brāhmaṇa guilty of these offences was to have his eyes covered over with cloth for the whole of his life.[10] It is clear that for the crime of theft generally death sentence was awarded.

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[1] Sulayman, p. 34.

[2] Idrisi, p. 35.

[3] Shahriyar, p. 137.

[4] Ibid, pp. 147-148.

[5] Ibn Battuta, p. 232.

[6] *Gaut.*, XII,15-16; *Manu*, VIII.338-339.

[7] *Manu*, IX.276-77; *Nārada (Pariśiṣṭa)* 32; Yāj, II.274.

[8] *Śukra*, IV.1.98-108.

[9] *Manu.*, VIII.323.

[10] *Ap. Dh. Sū.*, II, 10.27. 16-17.

Death Punishment for Killing of Cow and Drinking and Rape

Indians had great respect for the cows. According to Marvazi, Indian law provided that if any body killed a cow, he was to be put to death for it.[1] Ibn Rusta also records that there was a section in law which laid down that one who killed a cow was punished with death.[2] Cow-killing was one of the mahāpātakas, and one who was guilty of such crime was put to death. The Brāhmaṇas were, however, exempted.[3] In ancient India the king was considered "the protector of cows and Brāhmaṇas." The spiritual importance of cow also generated a feeling among the Hindus that she is a Devatā and should be protected by all means. So naturally cow-slaughter was prohibited. Religious sentiments also supported the cause of cow protection, which was regarded as a very sacred duty.[4]

Death sentence for drinking has been mentioned by Marvazi and Ibn Rusta. Both state that in the kingdom of Qimar (khmer, Combodia) the king punished with death those who were found guilty of committing the offence of wine-drinking and adultery. The king awarded punishment to his attendants, generals and soldiers for drinking. One hundred red hot iron rings were put on the arms of the drinker, who often died.[5] Cutting of both hands and feet, the nose, lips and ears was included among the punishment.[6] The validity of the statement of these two writers is not beyond doubt because wine-drinking was very common in India, though it was not looked upon favourably.

Offences against female modesty (Strīsangrahaṇa) included seduction, adultery and rape. They were divided into three classes according to the means used by men, such as force, fraud mutual amorous desires.[1] In the case of adultery the distinction of caste was of the greatest importance in the award of punishments, which varied from fine, banishment and execution. Twenty relations are mentioned, adultery with whom was met with severe punishment.[2] As regards punishment for rape Sulayman observes, "If any man in India runs away with a woman, and abuses her body, they kill both, him and woman, unless it be proved that she was forced, then the man only is punished with death, but if the woman consented to the evil deed, they are punished with death, both the one and the other."[3] Punishment for adultery was undoubtedly heavy and cruel. According to Ibn Rusta, adultery was not lawful with all kings of Hind. They put to death both the adulterers.[4] Al-Biruni also confirms in respect of women, "An adultress is drivcn out of the house of the husband and banished."[5] Punishment for rape in our law-books is very severe. According to Bṛhaspati, if a woman of the same caste is raped by a man he should be deprived of his property. He was also liable to be punished with the cutting of his penis and testicles and was to be paraded on the back of an ass. "If the woman, raped, was of a lower caste, then half of the punishment was to be awarded, and if she was of higher caste, he was to be sentenced to death together with confiscation of all property."[6] Kātyāyana holds that if a man has forcibly had sexual intercourse with a woman he should be punished with death.[7] As regards punishment for an adultress, she was treated very cruelly. According to Vasiṣṭha, she should be shaved and paraded naked on an ass and left to die.[1] Gautama prescribes that she should be openly devoured by dogs.[2] Manu also holds the same view.[3] Hārīta recommends that her ears, nose and lips should be cut off and then she should be banished. He also prescribes death penalty for her.[4] But it should be noted, as P.V. Kane observes, that these severe penalties for adultery were very much relaxed and softened by the later Smṛti writers.[5] Punishment was thus related to the degree of improper conduct and to the caste distinction of men and women.

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[1] Marvazi, p. 51.

[2] Ibn Rusta (Nainar), p. 106.

[3] *Viṣṇu Dh. Sutra*, V.1; *Cf. Manu* , IX.236.

[4] See pp. 152-155.

[5] Marvazi, p. 51, Ibn Rusta, p. 132 (Tr. p. 49); *Cf.* Nainar, pp. 112-113.

[6] Ibid, Qazwini gives more or less the same information. He quotes Ibn-ul-Faqah, but De Goeje's version of Ibn-ul-Faqah has no such account.

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[1] *Mit. on Yāj.*, II. 283; *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 365), vv. 1-2.

[2] *Nārada*, XII, 73-74, 85.

[3] Sulayman, p. 34.

[4] Ibn Rusta, p. 49.

[5] Al-Biruni, II, p. 162.

[6] *Bṛhaspati* (*SBE*, Vol. 33, p. 366) v. 10, quoted in *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 320.

[7] *Kātyāyana*, 830; *Smṛti Candrikā*, II, p. 320.

Treatment of Prisoners

The treatment of criminals in prison was not good. According to Sulayman, whenever any one was put into prison, or was under arrest, he was given neither food nor drink for seven days. And this, "with them, answers the end of other tortures to extort from the criminal a confession of the truth."[6]

Law of Murder

Bṛhaspati mentions four kinds of violent acts, of which the first is murder.[7] It is also declared the worst in another text.[8] If the murderer was a Brāhmaṇa and the murdered person belongs to another caste, the Brāhmaṇa was only bound to do expiation, consisting of fasting, prayers and alms-giving. If the murdered person was a Brāhmaṇa, then the murderer was not punished, and he was not also allowed to do expiation, "because expiation would wipe off the sin from the sinner whilst nothing could wipe off any of the mortal crimes, from a Brāhmaṇa. He was left to answer for it in a future life. The greatest mortal crimes were the murder of a Brāhmaṇa (Vajrabrahmahatyā), the killing of a cow, the drinking of wine, whoredom, especially, with the wife of one's own father and teacher. However, the king did not, for any of these crimes, kill a Brāhmaṇa or Kṣatriya, but he was deprived of all his property and was banished from the country. If a man belonging to caste of other than the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas, killed a man of the same caste he had to do expiation; besides, the king inflicted upon him punishment 'in order to establish an example.'[1]

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[1] *Vas.*, XXI.1-3.
[2] *Gaut.*, XXIII.14.
[3] *Manu*, VIII.371.
[4] *Hārita*, VII.192.
[5] Kane, *HDS*, II, pp. 571-573.
[6] Sulayman, p. 35.
[7] *Bṛhaspati*, XXII.1.
[8] Ibid, XXII.29.

There was no corporal and capital punishment for a Brāhmaṇa.[2] Gautama prescribes that a king should exonarate (the Brāhmaṇas) in six matters, viz. (a Brāhamaṇa) should not be beaten (whipped), he should not have fetters put on him, he should not be mulcted in fines of money, he should not be driven out (of the village and country), he should not be censured, he should not be abandoned.[3] But it should be noted that these privileges were only recommended to the learned Brāhmaṇas.[4] In no case were they given corporal and capital punishments. "The only special privilege claimed for the Brāhmaṇa in the law courts of the land was freedom from death sentence or other corporal punishment like whipping, though rarely he was liable to be sentenced to death, he was subjected to the indignities of branding and being paraded on the back of an ass, to fines and banishment."[5] Gautama, Manu, Yājñavalkya, Nārada, Viṣṇu and Vṛddhahārīta prescribe that "a Brāhmaṇa was not to be sentenced to death or corporal punishment for any offence deserving the death penalty; he was to be punished by ordering his entire head to be shaved, he might be banished from the country (from the city according to Nārada) a mark appropriate to the grave sin commited by him might be branded on his forehead and he might be paraded on an ass.[6]

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1. Al-Biruni, II p. 162.
2. *Manu.*, XI.99-100.
3. *Gautam*, VIII.12-13.
4. *Mit. on Yāj*, II.4.
5. Kane, *HDS*, II, p. 142.
6. Ibid. III, p. 396.

Al-Biruni does not mention death penalty for a Kṣatriya guilty of the mahāpātakas. But the Viṣṇu Dharmasūtra provides that all persons, except Brāhmaṇas, guilty of the mahāpātakas may be sentenced to death.[1] Manu adds that it should be only given, if they performed no prāyaścitta.[2] But Al-Biruni prescribes no prāyaścitta for the Mahāpātakas even to the Brāhmaṇa. He says that Kṣatriyas enjoyed immunity from capital punishment. It seems that this privilege was, as Dr. Altekar points out, actually claimed by and conceded to the elite among the Kṣatriyas.[3]

Discussing the view that the Brāhmaṇas were differently treated by the Hindu Criminal Law and "were placed above the law," S. Vardachariar remarks that Hindu criminal law prescribed two kinds of punishments, secular and spiritual. The Brāhmaṇas were given spiritual penalty which was "severer than in the case of the other castes and that according to the prevalent ideas of the time, the fear of such punishment was even greater than the fear of secular penishment."[4] It may be noted that the punishments were administered by Brahmanical authority.

The Law of Reacceptance Into the Caste

Reacceptance of the excommunicated person into his caste, could take place on the performance of prescribed penances,[5] although early Muslim writers inform us that it was very difficult for the Hindus to come back into the caste after going through various penances, if they had lost their caste for some reasons.[6]

Penances as well as Punishment Prescribed for a Crime

According to Al-Biruni, in punishing an act of murder, both penances and punishments were prescribed. This was arranged in the following manner : If a Brāhmaṇa murdered a member of the lower caste, only penance, consisting of fasts, prayers and alms-giving, was ordained, in the case of acts of murder among people of lower castes, penance as well as punishment was provided, and in the case of murderous deed and other grave crimes among Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas punishment consisting of confiscation and banishment were prescribed. This statement agrees with the prescriptions of the Dharamaśāstras. According to Baudhāyana, a man who kills a bull should observe Candrāyaṇa penance after paying the fine.[1] Nārada also recommends that for sexual crimes (agamyāgamana) the king should punish the criminal, and also the sin should be destroyed by Prāyaścitta.[2] Referring to this Jolly remarks, "There being no fine line of demarcation between penance and punishments both may be applied indiscriminately....Probably the line of demarcation between the church and the state was never fixed with any certainty and it is also to be remembered that the princes with religious zeal themselves used to enforce the performance of the penances prescribed in the Dharmaśāstras."[3]

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[1] *Viṣṇu Dh. S.*, V.1.

[2] *Manu*, IX.236.

[3] Altekar : *Rāṣṭrakūṭas and Their Times*, p. 330.

[4] S. Vardachariar : *The Hindu Judicial System*, p. 220 ff.; Cf. Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 396, 399; Altekar, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

[5] Jolly, *Hindu Law and Custom*, p. 262.

[6] See, pp. 21-24.

Law of Inheritance

We have already discussed the rights of daughter and widow to perperty. The daughter's share was one fourth of the son's. If she was unmarried, her dowry was bought out of her share.[4] Afterwards she had no share in the income of her father's house. As regards the right of the widow, she had to be only maintained with nourishment and clothing by the heir of her deceased husband.[5] Only maintanance to the widow was allowed by the law-givers.[6]

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1. *Baudhāyana*, I.19.4.
2. *Nārada*, I.2 ff.
3. Jolly, *op. cit.*, p.267.
4. Al-Biruni, II, p. 164.
5. Ibid.
6. *Nārada*, XII.28-30; *Kautilya*, III.5; *Hārita*, IV.9.

Rules regarding the Male heirs

As regards the rule about male heirs, the descendants, i.e., the son and grandson, had a nearer claim to inheritance than the ascendants, i.e., the father and grandfather. Further, the nearer a man was related, the greater claim he had to inheritence. That is, a son had a nearer claim than a grandson, a father more than a grandfather.[1]

The collateral relations, e.g., the brothers had less claim and inherited only when no body had a better claim. According to the rule, the son of a daughter had more claim than the son of a sister, and that the son of a brother had more claim, than either of them.[2]

If there were several claimants of the same degree of relationship, say, sons or brothers, they all got equal shares. A hermaphrodite was reckoned as a male being.[3]

According to the Mitākṣarā, the son acquires an interest in the property of his father, ancestral or self-acquired on his birth. But under the Dāyabhāga the son has no co-ownership with the father during the latter's life-time, as his ownership arises only upon the cessation of the father's ownership. The father is free to give or sell the property without the sons' consent.[4]

Liability of the heir of the Debtor

The heir of the debtor has an obligation to pay the debts incurred by the deceased, even when he has got no assets from the deceased. Al-Biruni says, "The debts of the deceased must be paid by his heir, either out of his share or of the stock of his own property, no regard being had whether the deceased has left any property or not. Likewise he must bear the just mentioned expenses for the widow in any case whatsoever."[1] But a debt incurred by the deceased for immoral purposes is not binding on the heir.[2]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II, p. 164.

[2] Ibid, p. 165.

[3] Ibid.

[4] *Mit. of Yāj.*, II.114; *Dāyabhāga.* II.28-30; *Cf.* Sen, *Hindu Jurisprudence*, p. 140.

The Law of reversion to the King

Al-Biruni says that, if the deceased had no heir, the estate reverted to the king, but this did not apply to a deceased Brāhmaṇa. In that case the king had no right to meddle with the inheritance, which was exclusively spent on alms-giving.[3] Manu also recommends that the wealth of the Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras can be taken by the king in default of heirs, but 'the property of a Brāhmaṇa must never be taken by the king.'[4] Gautama is also of the view that in the absence of an heir the property, except that of the Brāhmaṇa, goes to the king.[5] His property should go to the spiritual teacher or pupil, or to the fellow-student of the deceased or to the community of the Brāhmaṇas, particularly to the learned Brāhmaṇas.[6] According to Baudhāyana the property of a Brāhmaṇa is worse than poison.[7] Jolly's comment on this that it reminds one of the special favour shown to the Brāhmaṇas.[8]

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[1] Al-Biruni, II.164.

[2] *Bṛhaspati*, XI.51; *Cf. Manu.*, VIII.159.

[3] Al-Biruni, II, p. 165.

[4] *Manu*, IX.189; *Cf. Āp.*, II.14, 5; *Vas.*, XVII.83. According to *Kull.* and *Ragh.* the repetition of the prohibition to take the property of a *Brāhmaṇa* shows that if no learned and virtuous *Brāhmaṇas* are to be found, the king shall give the estate of a *Brāhmaṇa* deceased without heirs, 'even to men who have nothing but the name of the *Brāhmaṇa caste*'. (On *Manu*).

[5] *Gautam*, XXVIII.42.

[6] Kane, *HDS*, III, pp. 762-63.

[7] *Baudhāyana*, I, 13.15-16.

[8] Jolly, *Hindu Law and Customs*, p. 189.

CONCLUSION

It is clear from the foregoing that except for Al-Biruni no other early Muslim writer has approached the subject in a critical manner. Although early Muslim writers provide valuable information on Indian life, their knowledge of India was vague and incomplete. There is little originality in most of these writers. Their accounts are generally based on secondary sources and the works of previous authors. Al-Biruni has, however, drawn freely on Hindu sources. On the basis of the information provided by them one cannot form a very clear and authentic picture of Indian life. Al-Biruni may be regarded as an exception, but even his statements at most places, do not seem to have been derived from actual observation. Even so, the importance of his 'Indica' cannot be ignored as a source of information. His treatment of the subject and his approach are entirely his own. Both in their content, and manner of presentation the accounts of other Muslim writers are faulty; in contrast, Al-Biruni's account is balanced and comprehensive. Whenever he criticises the Indian system or the Hindu view of life, he seems to be nearer the truth than any single authority, Indian or foreign, on the subject. The weaknesses of Indian society have been pointed out with understanding and candour.

The period under study reveals the process of political and social disintegration, each linked up with the other. The social and political system of the Hindus bid fair to the establishment of Muslim rule in India. The Arab conquest of Sind in the beginning of the eighth century and the successive invasions of Mahmud in the eleventh century were clear warnings to the Hindus to keep their house in order but they failed to take heed of the impending danger and in consequence India paid a heavy price. The impact of Muslims on India, more in evidence at a later stage, could not leave the Hindu system unaffected. In the early medieval period one may discover some traces of the impact here and there but, by and large, Hindu social and religious life remained undisturbed.

As regards the social system, the early Muslim writers do not present a faithful account of Hindu society. They were mainly struck by its external features and contradictions which, undoubtedly, provide a fairly satisfactory explanation of its weakness. But this is just a part of the story, The principles of Hindu social organisation needed to be studied in depth, for which we have to look in vain in these writers, with the exception of Al-Biruni. Many of their observations are ill-informed. For instance, the division of society into seven castes, the two castes of the Kṣatriyas, the lower status of the Brāhmaṇas as compared to the first caste of the Kṣatriyas are unknown to Indian history. Even Al-Biruni follows the traditional line of Hindu social organisation. The number of castes and sub-castes were much more than sixteen. While dealing with the various castes and groups of his time, Al-Biruni, surprisingly enough, makes no mention of the Jats and the Kayasthas, who by that time had become sufficiently important. However, the superiority of the Brāhmaṇas as a class is well noticed by Muslim writers, which accords with the facts.

The parallelism in the position of the Brāhmaṇas and the Kṣatriyas on the one hand and of the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras on the other, seems to have been more marked during this period than it is now. Though the Vaiśyas and the Śūdras differed from each other, they lived together in the same towns and villages, and were even mixed up in the same houses and lodgings. Probably, the Śūdras, at any rate, a small section of them, were economically better off in this period. It seems that the Vaiśyas as a caste had lost to some extent their separate identity which they had enjoyed previously. Outside these castes were the two groups of the Antyajas who performed various kinds of services and were known by their profession. Al-Biruni classifies them into trade guilds. They had to live outside the villages and towns. Below them was a still more degraded class consisting of the Hādis, Ḍombas, Cāṇḍālas and Badhatau, who were probably connected with the aboriginal races. They were lumped together as one class and did all sorts of dirty work.

Class-consciousness (closely linked with caste) among the Brāhmaṇas and Kṣatriyas was greater than among other castes and sub-castes. The Muslim writers point out that the Brāhmaṇas were the devotees of India and, according to Al-Biruni, they never married women of other castes. They neither paid taxes nor did they perform any other service to the king. 'The Kṣatriyas who formed the ruling class were proud of their higher status. It was one of the paramount duties of the king to stop mixture of castes by means of royal decree. The rigid notion of caste-distinction has been noticed by the Muslim writers. The untouchables, i.e., the Antyajas, were a degraded lot, not allowed to pass freely in the streets of villages and towns of the savarṇa classes. It seems that the notion of untouchability had gained in intensity during this period. Lest his purity and orthodoxy he threatened, a Brāhmaṇa was not allowed to enter the country of the Turks. He had to live in demarcated areas. A ban was imposed on sea-voyage and the crossing of the Indus was prohibited. If anybody took up the occupation of other castes, he was believed to have committed a sin or crime, which was considered only a little less heinous than the crime of theft. Similarly, if a Brāhmaṇa ate even in the house of a Śūdra for sundry days, he was expelled from his caste and could never regain it.

The accounts of Muslim writers relating to the laws of marriage, customs, and the position of women are generally in conformity with the rules and customs of the country. Some of these observations, however, are fantastic. For instance, Sulayman observes that Indians married women of their choice, which is not correct. The forbidden degrees in marriage were so clearly laid down that their violation on any considerable scale was unthinkable. Similarly, the statements of Marvazi, Gardizi and Idrisi on pratiloma marriages seem far from correct. Such marriages had gone out of vogue long before. Nevertheless, many of their observations throw a good deal of light on the prevailing condition of women. Al-Biruni's remark that the arrival of a female child was received without joy is substantially true even now. Child-marriages were the order of the day. Al-Biruni rightly observes that the widows preferred death on the funeral pyres of their husbands to life of absolute misery, which would be their lot if they decided to live. The institution of Satī was well in vogue, and it has been correctly pointed out. The view of most writers that fornication was permissible seems baseless. Hindu society was in no sense a permissive society. Al-Biruni rightly says that both parties were severely punished. His remark that prostitutes were maintained by kings as a source of revenue seems quite true. Moreover, they provided entertainment for which there was a craving in the richer sections of society. Devadāsīs formed an integral part of temple-worship throughout India. Women appeared in royal courts at social gatherings. Al-Biruni observes that most of the festivals were primarily celebrated by women and children. In the eye of law, the women had hardly any rights. She could not inherit the property of her husband and was entitled to only bare necessities of life. In this regard unmarried daughters were slightly better.

The life of the people seems to have been peaceful and simple. They observed a number of fasts and festivals. Though festivals were mainly of a religious character, some of them provided occasions of merry-making. As regards food and drinks, one may generally say that meat-eating was not popular. The cow's flesh was strictly forbidden. Drinking was not unknown. We have references to moderate drinking.

Early Muslim writers have dealt at some length with the manners and customs of the Hindus. Some of the customs and practices, such as Antyeṣṭi and suicide, are in conformity with the Indian sources, Al-Biruni's account is based on the

Smṛtis and on other sources. The methods of committing suicide, as mentioned by Muslim writers, are, no doubt, revealing. This horrible custom, though criticised and condemned by some authorities, had a religious basis and was practised by those who sought salvation.

These writers have made interesting observations on Hindu-Muslim relations, which have some relevance even in our times. According to them, the two communities represented two entirely different modes of life. Hindus have been criticised for their anti-Muslim attitude. On the whole, however, the estimate of Hindu character, especially by Al-Biruni, is sympathetic and objective. His remarks that the Hindus of his time had become conceited, and developed an exclusive mentality and were the willing to communicate their knowledge to others, are substantially correct. He adds that 'their ancestors were not as narrowminded as the present generation is' and that 'if they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind.' While not sparing the Hindus for their aversion to foreigners, he is candid enough to admit that the Muslims were partly responsible for it. He refers to the ruthless suppression of the Hindus by Mahmud of Ghazna, who had 'utterly destroyed the prosperity of the country.'

Early Muslim writers have dealt in detail with the beliefs of the Hindus in God, angels, soul, salvation, the joys of paradise, the pains of hell and idol worship. Al-Biruni's account is comperatively more informative. He has employed the comparative method to make the subject intelligible. But it may be pointed out that many of his quotations do not appear to have been taken from the original Hindu sources. He makes distinction between the religious practices of the educated and the uneducated. He observes that the educated people and those who wanted to liberate themselves from this world worshipped no deity other than God and they had no faith in image-worship. Many of the practices to which he refers still exist. Early Muslim writers refer to forty-two religious sects among the Hindus. Their treatment of the subject is very vague, as these sects cannot be identified correctly with those that are known to exist from other reliable sources. They seem to be confused in their understanding of the various schools of Indian religious thought.

The Hindus used to perform a number of socio-religious rites at various stages. Al-Biruni has mentioned certain Saṁskāras, the rules and regulations of which are based on the Smṛtis. His account also throws light on various fasts and festivals of the early medieval period, some of which are still observed. Pilgrimages to holy places were very common. The temples at Somanātha, Multan, Thāneśvara and Kashmir attracted a large number of pilgrims and devotees from most distant places. Valuable presents were offered to gods and goddesses.

As regards law and punishment, Muslim writers hardly add anything to the information available in Hindu sources. Al-Biruni alone has treated the subject in detail, but his account is based on law-books and not on personal observation. The ordeals have been discussed at some length in Muslim writings, perhaps because they were in vogue in the early medieval period. But their statements on punishment and penances do not always agree with the provisions in the Dharmaśāstras, which, undoubtedly were the most accepted authority on Hindu administration. After going through their accounts one gets the impression that law was mostly customary. But it should be noted that Hindu law had laid down some definite rules by which people as well as kings were governed. Besides, the religious sanction behind the law tended to make it supreme.

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